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From safari guides to schoolchildren, a growing movement in Karnataka is teaching people how to see, interpret, and care for nature, writes Varsha Gowda

In the nooks and crannies of our fast-paced world, countless strange and beautiful life forms continue to live their lives. To the unacquainted eye, their presence may be easy to ignore, walk past, or relegate to the back of our minds.

Noticing this growing disconnect, nature educators in Karnataka are encouraging slower, more attentive ways of engaging with the world. By inviting people to pause and observe with intention, naturalists are inspiring people to understand the lives – both big and small – unfolding alongside our own.

It was encounters with forests, an understanding of the complex web of life, and a fascination with the stories of its many characters that led Payal Mehta and Harsha Jayaramaiah, who grew up in Bengaluru and Mumbai, to build careers as naturalists and safari guides.

With over two decades of experience as safari guides, they understand their role in bridging visitors' expectations with the realities of forest ecosystems. While many tourists arrive hoping to sight iconic animals like elephants and tigers, trained guides are able to draw attention to the intricate ecological interactions unfolding across biodiverse landscapes.

"A professionally trained guide might not only tell the story of the tiger but also the rivers that originate in tiger reserves, the birds, insects, and other animals encountered on the safari," explains Harsha.

Recognising an emerging need within the tourism industry and the potential to cultivate interest in the natural world, the duo began offering informal training programmes for safari guides across India. To formalise this work, they established the Nature Guides Academy (NGA) three years ago.

Their flagship five-week residential course at Kanha Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh is aimed at working safari guides as well as professionals seeking to transition into naturalist roles, with an annual intake of 18 students. Sunil Reddy, a graduate of the programme, left a 15-year career in IT after completing the course and now works as a senior naturalist at a lodge in Kabini.

"The course taught us how to interpret nature. In Kabini, for instance, fresh grass sprouts near the river in April and May," he says,



A training programme organised by the Nature Guides Academy.

In the vast and layered history of Karnataka, not all stories are written in stone inscriptions or preserved in royal chronicles. Some are woven quietly into everyday life – into objects so ordinary that they escape attention. The Haigala Meli towel is one such artefact: a simple handwoven cloth that carries within it centuries of rural life, labour and cultural identity.

Even today, many elderly people across rural Karnataka remember the texture, durability and familiarity of these towels. During my conversations in villages, especially with those in their eighties, these memories came alive – not as distant history, but as lived experience. Historically, much of Karnataka formed part of a vibrant textile-producing landscape. From the early Deccan dynasties to the height of the Vijayanagara Empire, weaving played a central role in the region's economy. Inscriptions speak of organised weaving communities, taxes paid in cloth, and textiles offered to temples.

While these records often highlight fine fabrics, they also point to a parallel world of coarse, utilitarian cottons – fabrics like the Haigala Meli, made for everyday use.

Woven from local cotton and dyed with natural colours, the Haigala Meli towel was designed for function. It served as a



A workshop on nature education for teachers.

Nature, up close: Hidden rhythms of the wild



Students engage in activities at Nature Classrooms sessions; students attend a Thicket Tales programme.

noting that elephants seek it out as vegetation in the forest becomes scarce during these months. "You also learn to observe herd dynamics, the interactions between calves and ageing elephants, and, when shared with guests, these details enrich their experience."

The course fee is Rs 1.75 lakh. Close to 60% of students in the course receive a partial or full scholarship.

Aditi Rao, who took a free online course by the NGA for young people in the Western Ghats, explains how nature education can be transformative. "The course developed our observation skills through assignments that required nature journaling, or videos of us guiding relatives or friends," she recalls. Ultimately, the course struck something in her and went on to define her career path, prompting her to pursue an MSc in Wildlife Sciences. "It opened up a world of possibilities in nature

education and provided me with a network, guidance and opportunity," she says.

Local biodiversity

Today, Aditi works with Nature Classrooms, an organisation integrating school learning with nature education. Through workshops and interventions with educators, the organisation aims to include ecology and local biodiversity in the existing Environmental Science (EVS) curriculum.

"We encourage educators to incorporate resource materials and activities into their existing lesson plans through workshops," says Priyanka Prakash, senior manager at the organisation. For instance, they developed alphabet charts in five languages featuring the local biodiversity.

Gousia Taj, an educator from Hesaraghatta who teaches the EVS curriculum in three schools, says that the nature bingo exercise is particularly popular with children. Through activities and discussions, the course has familiarised students with the plants, animals, and insects around them, nurturing sensitivity, curiosity, and a love for these creatures.

Curiosity

This curiosity and ownership in one's surroundings is essential for children, explains Sudhir Kiran, President of Ashoka Shishu Vihara schools in Bengaluru.

"We have so much happening around us in our environment. Nature education provides children with the opportunity to understand this and realise how it impacts us,

how they can contribute to it, and how they can articulate their support for it," he explains.

His schools conduct programmes with Thicket Tales, which works to integrate nature education with science and social science curricula.

Saidevi Sanjeeviraja, founder of the organisation, explains how weekly outdoor experiences address the relevance of what is available to the children academically. Through the Learn Around Nature programme, a year-long initiative, students visit Cubbon Park or Lal Bagh, where they are encouraged to observe, interact with nature, and engage in discussions about soil and water.

At the end of the year, students undertake projects based on problems they have identified throughout the programme. For example, a team at a school in Jayanagar identified nine unauthorised garbage dumps and contacted municipal authorities to have them cleared. "Some dumps returned, but others remained clean," she says. "We are happy because we have contributed to change and do not feel pity when we look at the dumps. We know we are capable of solving the problem," one student says. An unexpected change has been how the programme, which caters to students in Classes 5 to 8, has had a ripple effect on younger children as well, explains Kiran. "In their interactions with older students, the younger children are able to better articulate their surroundings and the environment," he says.

A simple act nourishes students

A teacher's concern and a vendor's generosity ensure students in government schools of Dakshina Kannada enjoy fresh, sufficient vegetables in their mid-day meals, writes Eranna Bengali

A small act of kindness is making a big difference in Bantwal's government schools. Thanks to a teacher's observation, a vegetable vendor's generosity and the support of the local community, students in six government schools now receive fresh and adequate vegetables in their mid-day meals every day.

It all began as a simple concern. One afternoon 10 years ago, the kitchen at the Government Higher Primary School in Maji Veerakamba near Bantwal in Dakshina Kannada district was bustling as usual. A large pot of *sambar* simmered, while outside, children sat in neat rows with plates, waiting to be served. But teacher Sangeetha noticed something amiss: There were too few vegetables in the *sambar*.

Although the official supply had not changed, it appeared insufficient. Concerned that it might not provide adequate nutrition for all the children, she decided to find a solution.

She walked to a vegetable shop in Bantwal and, standing hesitantly before the young trader, explained the situation. The school's vegetable supply was inadequate, she said, and asked if he could help.

The vendor, Muhammed Shareef, did not hesitate. He agreed immediately and asked that someone from the school visit his shop every day to collect vegetables.

What began with one school has now grown into a larger effort. Shareef currently supplies free vegetables to six nearby government schools.

While the Maji Veerakamba Government School receives around 18–20 kg of vegetables daily, the Nandavara Government School gets about 5–6 kg per day. Schools in Kelinja, Bayila, Nagri Bollai and Kanchinadka Padavu Sajipa also receive weekly supplies of vegetables.

Local residents and school staff also volunteer to help transport vegetables. Chinnu Kalladka, an alumnus of one of these schools, delivers vegetables to three schools on his two-wheeler, while teachers either arrange transport or collect supplies themselves for two schools. Shareef delivers vegetables to the Nandavara school. "We supply vegetables such

as carrots, cabbage, beans, long yard beans and ivy gourd so that children receive proper nutrition through their mid-day meals," says Shareef. On average, vegetables worth Rs 1,000 reach school kitchens each day through this initiative. Despite fluctuations in market prices, Shareef's service continues uninterrupted.

In addition to government schools, Shareef supplies vegetables to private schools at concessional rates. To encourage wider community participation, he has placed a donation box labelled "My contribution to government school" at his vegetable shop. The initiative received an early boost from Padma Shri awardee Harekala Hajabba, who made the first contribution.

"Great works begin with small contributions. When many hands come together, developmental work becomes easier. The work being done by Shareef is exemplary," Hajabba said.

Shareef credits his family for their unwavering support in his social work. His father, Abdul Hameed, and brothers, Mohammed Nazeer and Miyaz, have been his pillars of strength. A few years ago, when road widening forced them to vacate their shop, the late Dr Gangadhara Rao offered them space at a concessional rent – a gesture that Shareef hopes to emulate.

Beyond mid-day meals, Shareef also provides vegetables free of cost during school events and special occasions. His work has earned praise from education officials, teachers, parents and community organisations.

"This is a small contribution towards children's meals," Shareef says. "If people support nearby government schools, we can improve them further."

Lauding the service of Shareef, Malathi K, in-charge Block Education Officer of Bantwal, says, "He is an inspiration to society at a time when people think twice to donate money. He has been supplying vegetables to government schools without expecting anything in return. I learned about his work when I visited the Government Higher Primary School in Maji Veerakamba, and I was glad to see the service he had rendered."

(Translated from Kannada by Naina JA)



The first public contribution to Muhammed Shareef's initiative to supply free vegetables to government schools came from Padma Shri awardee Harekala Hajabba.

Woven into life: The quiet legacy of Haigala Meli

towel, a head wrap, a shoulder cloth and a shield against the sun.

Across Karnataka, this towel took on different regional forms. In the Mysuru–Mandya belt, finer weaves carried delicate motifs, sometimes even small bird or peacock forms woven into the fabric. In North Karnataka, bold borders – often in black or deep red – framed the cloth with striking simplicity. In Central Karnataka, large checks and strong colour contrasts dominated, practical and visually distinct.

These patterns are not abstract

descriptions – they are tied to people and memory.

I remember Hussain Sab, a weaver who wore a worn-out white towel with a broad black border. It was frayed at the edges, yet he carried it with ease, as if it were an extension of himself. In another village, farmer Kembavi wore a towel with a wide red border and large checks – typical of Central Karnataka – its boldness reflecting both utility and identity. And then there was Rajappa, a farmer, whose towel stood out with its red base and a yellow peacock motif in the pallu,



The Haigala Meli towel is a versatile everyday cloth, used as a towel, head wrap and shoulder drape. In pic, farmers cover their heads with the towel. PHOTOS BY AUTHOR



a quiet reminder of the motif traditions seen in southern parts of the state.

Each conversation revealed how deeply embedded the Haigala Meli towel once was in everyday life. It was not something people thought about – it was simply there, reliable and constant. It marked work, routine and belonging.

But this ecosystem has been steadily unravelling.

The decline began during the colonial period, when machine-made textiles entered Indian markets in large quantities. Cheaper and more uniform, they disrupted traditional weaving systems. Yet, the Haigala Meli continued for some time, sustained by habit and necessity.

Lost in perception

The more significant shift has taken place in recent decades.

As livelihoods became uncertain, many weavers left their looms. Demand weakened as consumers turned to factory-made alternatives – cheaper, more varied and easily available. Migration to cities further accelerated this change. With new environments came new perceptions.

The Haigala Meli towel, once worn with ease, began to be seen differently. In urban spaces, it was often associated with rural backwardness. Many avoided wearing it publicly, fearing a loss of respect.

What had once symbolised dignity in labour slowly became something people hesitated to be identified with.

As a result, local manufacturing has declined sharply. Weaving clusters have thinned out, and younger generations see little reason to continue the craft. Haigala Meli towels from other states now dominate the market – affordable and accessible, but disconnected from local histories.

The Haigala Meli towel represents a system where material, environment and human need were closely aligned. It reflects knowledge built over generations – of cotton, of climate, of weaving. It carries within it the rhythms of rural Karnataka.

There is, however, a possibility of renewal.

As interest in handloom and sustainable textiles grows, there is space to re-value such traditions – not as relics, but as relevant practices. Restoring dignity to everyday objects like the Haigala Meli requires not just market support, but a shift in perception. It requires recognising that simplicity does not mean insignificance.

The Haigala Meli towel is more than a piece of cloth. If its threads are to endure, they must be held not just in hand, but in regard.

(The author is a textile researcher)

DH



DECCAN HERALD

The Power of Good

Russia takes full control of Luhansk region

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State

Bypolls, a litmus test for Siddu, DKS & Vijayendra

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Trump says US may exit Iran war soon; threatens to quit Nato

CONFLICT SIMMERS: US prez claims Iran sought ceasefire; Tehran terms it ‘baseless’

WASHINGTON/JERUSALEM/CAIRO, REUTERS

The United States will end its war on Iran fairly soon and could return for “spot hits” if needed, President Donald Trump told *Reuters* on Wednesday, hours before he was scheduled to make a primetime address to the nation.

Trump also said he would state in the speech that he was considering withdrawing the US from the Nato alliance.

Asked when the US would consider the Iran war over, Trump said: “I can’t tell you exactly ... we’re going to be out pretty quickly.” US action has ensured Iran will not have nuclear arms, he added.

Trump said separately on social media that Iran had asked for a ceasefire but that he would not consider it until Tehran ceased blocking the Strait of Hormuz. “Iran’s New Regime President, much less Radicalised and far more intelligent than his predecessors, has just asked the United States of America for a CEASEFIRE!” said Trump, who did not specify who he had spoken to.

Iran’s foreign ministry spokesperson said Trump’s statement about a ceasefire request was false and baseless.

Two security sources from Pakistan, which is mediating in the conflict, earlier told *Reuters* Islamabad had proposed a temporary ceasefire to both sides but had not heard back from either.

Trump signalled on Tuesday he could wind down the war in two to three weeks even



Smoke billows from an oil warehouse in Erbil, in Iraq’s Kurdistan, following a drone strike. AFP

WEST ASIA ON WEDNESDAY			
Iran hits Amazon’s cloud computing operations centre in Bahrain	1.150 Indians have left Iran via land borders since Feb 28: MEA	Iran’s desalination plant on Qeshm Island in Strait of Hormuz hit	Drone attack kills Bangladeshi national in UAE’s Fujairah
14 people wounded by a suspected missile attack in Israel	Strikes damage steel plants in central, southwest Iran	Yemen’s Houthis claim missile attack targeting Israel	

Hormuz: UK to host summit

Britain will this week hold a meeting of about 35 countries to discuss how to reopen the strategic Strait of Hormuz which has been crippled by the West Asia war, Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced Wednesday. Details on Page 11

without a deal and scaled up threats to pull the US out of the Nato alliance if European states did not help stop Iran threatening the strait.

In his remarks to *Reuters*,

“They won’t have a nuclear weapon because they are incapable of that now, and then I’ll leave, and I’ll take everybody with me, and if we have to we’ll come back to do spot hits.

DONALD TRUMP, US President

Trump said he would express his disgust with Nato for what he considers the alliance’s lack of support for US objectives in Iran. He said he is “absolutely” considering an attempt to withdraw the US from Nato. European states took pains to appear unruffled and France’s junior army minister Alice Rufo said operations by Nato in the strait would be a breach of international law.

► **Trump, Page 5**

Commercial LPG costlier; ATF price up, IndiGo hikes fuel charge

NEW DELHI/BENGALURU, DHNS: The Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) prices for domestic airlines were hiked by a calibrated 8.5%.

ATF or jet fuel for domestic carriers was hiked by Rs 8,289.04 per kilolitre, or 8.56% to Rs 1,04,927.18 per kl from Rs 96,638.14 per kl last month, according to state-owned oil firms.

State-owned oil marketing company Indian Oil also notified that the price of the 19 kg commercial cylinder rose by Rs 195.5 per cylinder, from Rs 1,883 per cylinder to Rs 2,078.5 in Delhi.

Price of select premium, or branded petrol and diesel, which make up for 2-5% of all auto fuels sold in the country, too, was increased by Rs 1.50 a litre to Rs 92.99 for ‘Extra Green’ diesel and by Rs 11 to Rs 160 a litre for 100 octane petrol (XP100). Prices of normal, or unbranded petrol and diesel, remain unchanged, and so do the rates of domestic LPG.

IndiGo announced a revision in fuel charges

LPG price hike hurting hoteliers

The price of commercial gas was increased by Rs 202 applicable from April 1. With this, in just the last one month, the price of commercial gas has gone up by Rs 497. The hoteliers in Bengaluru are under pressure owing to the soaring prices. Details on Page 3

WAR SHOCKS

for both domestic and international routes. Fuel charges on domestic routes range from Rs 275 for flights up to 500 km to Rs 900 for sectors above 2,000 km. For international travel, the surcharge varies from Rs 900-2,500 within the Subcontinent, to Rs 3,000-10,000 for longer-haul destinations.

► **Fuel charges, Page 5**

Centre sets up control room to track prices P.8

Iran strikes Kuwait airport, tanker off Qatar P.11

King Charles to address US Cong amid tensions P.11

Amaravati as AP capital: LS passes Bill

The Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed a Bill seeking to recognise Amaravati as the sole and permanent capital of Andhra Pradesh. The legislation aims to give effect to an AP Assembly resolution requesting the Centre to declare Amaravati as the state capital. Details on Page 8

Nursing council registrar held for harassment

Dr K Mallu, Registrar (Nursing) of the Karnataka State Nursing Council, has been arrested for sexually harassing a female employee 25 years his junior. Fifty-year-old Dr Mallu has been remanded to judicial custody. Details on Page 2

Amid Oppn protest, govt defers debate on FCRA Amendment Bill

SHEMIN JOY NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Modi government deferred taking up the Foreign Contribution (Amendment) Regulation (FCRA) Bill for passage in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday, following a push-back from the Opposition parties, Christian leaders, as well as ‘pressure’ from the Kerala BJP, which fears it could negatively impact the party in the Assembly elections.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju told the House during Question Hour that the Bill would not be taken up and accused the Congress and CPM of misleading people on the issue.

The Kerala BJP, which is actively wooing the Christian community in the state, approached the central leadership, claiming that the passage of the Bill would impact its



Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju speaks in the Parliament on Wednesday. PTI

prospects, and sought to defer it. Sources said Kerala BJP chief Rajeev Chandrasekhar urged the BJP leadership to go slow on the Bill.

As soon as the Lok Sabha assembled for Question Hour, Opposition MPs shouted slogans against the Bill and demanded its withdrawal. Before the commencement of proceedings, the MPs had staged a protest. ► **FCRA, Page 5**

Bus rams into platform in Haveri, boy dies

HUBBALLI, DHNS: A two-and-half-year-old boy was crushed to death and four others sustained injuries after they were run over by an NWKRTC bus driven by a trainee driver at the Haveri bus stand on Wednesday.

The deceased, Hazrat Ali Ismail Raichur, died on the way to Karnataka Medical College.

According to the police, Manjunath R, the driver, was trying to park the bus at the platform when he probably pressed the accelerator instead of the brakes.

The injured -- Vasudev Gurunathappa Utalekar (44), his daughter Harsha (6), wife Kavyanjali (39), and Arbaz Khan Saudagar (13) were treated at a hospital and discharged. Manjunath had joined service eight months ago.

Five lakes, one threat: Kashmir’s looming flood risk

ZULFIKAR MAJID SRINAGAR, DHNS

High in the alpine reaches of Kashmir, where silence is broken only by wind and melting ice, a cluster of glacial lakes sits on the edge of a growing danger.

The state government has now confirmed that five such lakes in the Valley fall in the “very high susceptibility” category for Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) — sudden, devastating releases of water that can inundate entire stretches downstream.

The identification follows a recent scientific assessment by the University of Kashmir, which analysed glacial lakes across the region using satellite data over several decades. The study



GLOF WARNING

Kashmir’s glacial lakes in ‘very high susceptibility’ category for GLOFs

Over 2,700 buildings, 15 bridges and key roads lie in potential flood zones

Cloudbursts, avalanches, landslides or quakes could trigger sudden breaches

flagged five lakes as highly vulnerable due to a combination of rapid expansion, unstable natural dams and exposure to

external triggers.

CM Omar Abdullah said that while the classification does not indicate an immediate threat, it points to a higher likelihood of outbursts under specific conditions.

Glacial lakes are formed when retreating glaciers leave behind depressions that fill with meltwater. Unlike conventional lakes, they are typically held together by moraine — loose rock and ice debris — making them inherently fragile. A breach can release large volumes of water, debris and ice within minutes. According to glaciologist Irfan Rashid, who has led several studies on Himalayan glacial systems, the expansion of such lakes is linked to rising temperatures.

► **Kashmir, Page 5**





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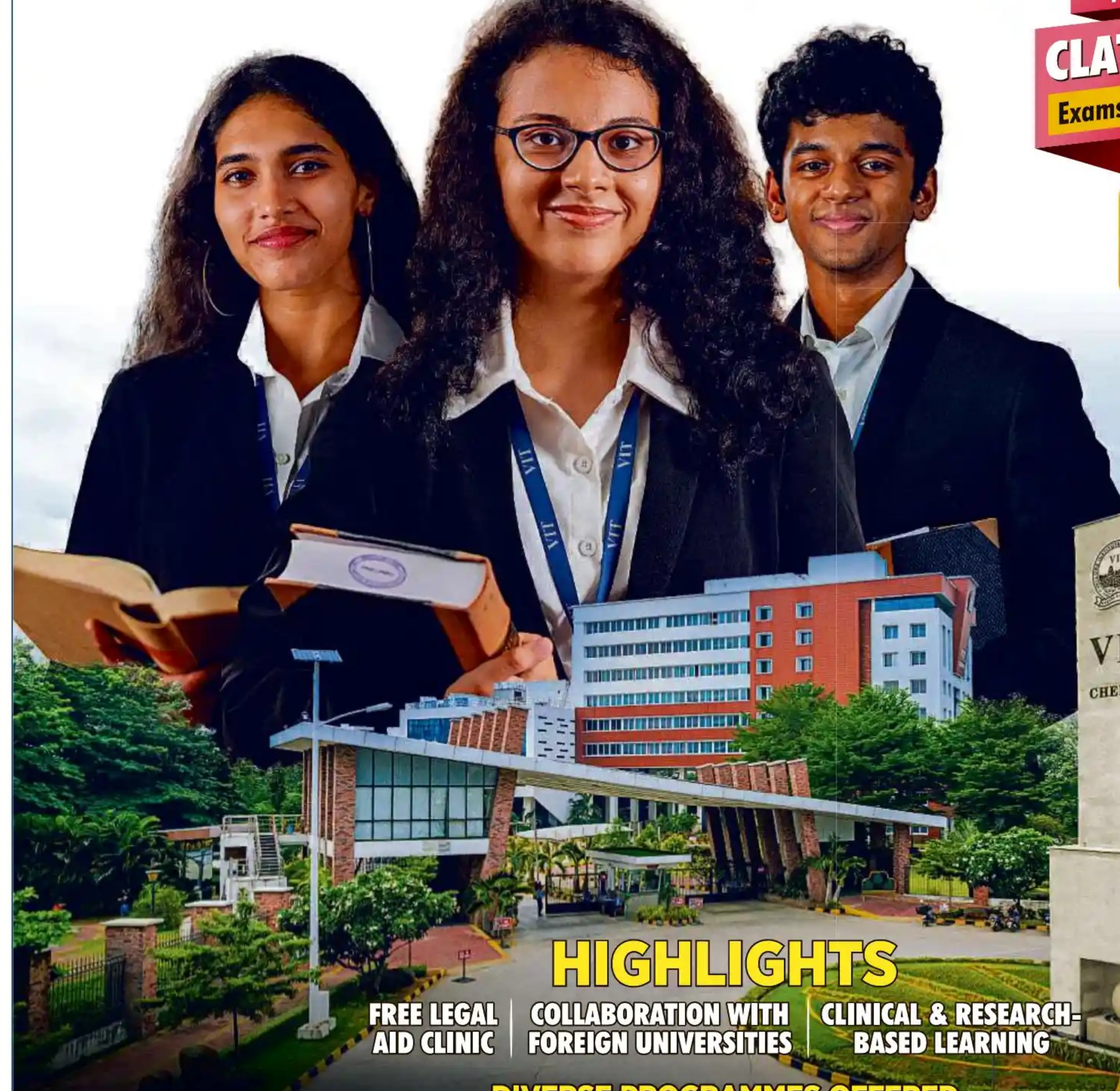
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Nursing council registrar held for sexual harassment

BENGALURU, DHNS: Karnataka State Nursing Council Registrar Dr K Mallu was arrested for sexually harassing a woman employee 25 years his junior, police said on Wednesday.

Upparpet police arrested the 50-year-old on Tuesday, four days after the woman lodged a formal complaint.

The woman, who works at Dr Mallu's office, alleged in her complaint that he sexually harassed her and that she was distressed to continue working.

After registering an FIR, police consulted legal experts and issued Dr Mallu a notice to appear for questioning and further procedures.

Dr Mallu did not appear before investigators, leading to his arrest on March 31. Police later produced him before a city court, which remanded him in judicial custody, a police officer said.



KRS releases first list of candidates for civic body elections

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Karnataka Rashtra Samithi (KRS) on Wednesday announced its first list of 25 candidates for the elections to the five city corporations under the Greater Bengaluru Area (GBA).

The party said the move aims to provide “clean and people-friendly governance” to the residents of Bengaluru.

KRS leaders pointed out that civic body elections in Bengaluru have not been held for over 11 years. They added that agencies such as the BBMP and the water board have been plagued by corruption and mismanagement. The party criticised the deterioration of the city's infrastructure, citing pothole-ridden roads, garbage black spots, waste burning, and overflowing drains as evidence of systemic failure.

Announcing the candidate list, KRS said the nominees have been actively working in their respective wards by addressing public grievances, exposing irregularities in civic works, and pushing for action against corruption. The candidates will also focus on ensuring the delivery of welfare benefits, including pensions.

The party also invited aspiring candidates to attend interviews held every Wednesday and Sunday at its headquarters in Rajajinagar. Interested individuals can contact the party through its official mobile number for further details.

Invites to be published should be sent to: incitytoday@deccanherald.co.in. Please note that hard copies will not be accepted

Organise mass travel as air and bus fares soar

ASRA MAVAD BENGALURU, DHNS

Ahead of the Kerala assembly elections on April 9, voters based in Bengaluru have begun finalising travel plans to their home districts to cast their votes.

Many groups of youngsters — students and working professionals — are carpooling to beat rising

bus and flight fares.

IT professional Shahid Kamal, 29, said three colleagues from his office, all from in and around Kannur, decided to carpool rather than pay Rs 4,000 to Rs 5,000 each for a bus ticket.

“There are very few buses available,” he said.

Solution architect Neetu S, 37, said she noticed more people in her office making proactive plans to travel home and vote. “In my office, too, many are planning to travel together,” she told *DH*.

Neetu plans to drive to Kozhikode this weekend with her husband and children to avoid the rush closer to polling day.



“My wife and I are driving down to vote for the first time since moving to Bengaluru. We felt this was necessary as change is necessary. You can clearly see that in the last 10 years, there has been no big initiative in Kerala. The changes you are seeing in Kerala are either a continuation of the previous government's work or developments that are supposed to happen with any government in power.”

ARJUN MS, IT professional (from Kozhikode)

students to head back home even if it is just for one or two days to cast their vote. We have received a positive response,” he said.

IT professional Arjun MS, from Kozhikode, is driving down to vote for the first time since moving to Bengaluru.

“My wife and I felt this was

necessary as change is necessary. You can clearly see that in the last 10 years, there has been no big initiative in Kerala. The changes you are seeing in Kerala are either a continuation of the previous government's work or developments that are supposed to happen with any government in power. There is

a similar sentiment among many, so we are expecting mass polling in the northern parts of Kerala,” he said.

Sanjay Alex, Kerala State Head (Sports) of the All-India Professionals' Congress, said about 2,000 voters would travel with the organisation in the coming week.

“We have arranged 15 buses so far, and another 15 are also being arranged. We plan to head out from Bengaluru on the evening of April 8. Many people have proactively reached out to us for assistance, especially from the Malabar region, covering Kannur, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kasargod and surrounding areas,” he said.

Man kidnapped for Rs 1 lakh ransom, brutally assaulted

Police zero in on five-member gang behind the crime

BENGALURU, DHNS

A Kerala man was allegedly abducted by a five-member gang from Electronics City and brutally assaulted for a ransom of Rs 1 lakh, police said.

The 28-year-old victim, a native of Palakkad, had been working in Qatar before moving to Bengaluru a few months ago. He had rented a house in Neeladri Nagar in Electronics City.

On March 25, the gang contacted him on the pretext

of settling a dispute involving his friend, Karthik. Trusting them, he agreed to meet them, but was instead forcibly taken away.

The suspects — identified as Danish, Alan, Anas, and two women, Anukrishna and Jinsha — confined him in a house where they assaulted him with knives, a shaving razor and metal rods, inflicting multiple injuries to his neck, face, shoulders, back and head, according to the FIR.

The gang also forced the victim to record videos of the

A senior police officer from the Electronics City sub-division said that with repeated cases of abduction and extortion being reported, especially in areas bordering Tamil Nadu, surveillance and patrolling have been intensified to curb such organised criminal activity.

Electronics City police have registered a case of abduction, attempt to murder, extortion and criminal intimidation, and said efforts are on to trace the accused.

Growing trend
Police officials noted that similar crimes have been reported

in the area in recent months, raising concerns over a growing trend of targeted abductions for ransom.

In February, a gang abducted a 28-year-old spa owner and demanded Rs 2 lakh to settle gambling-related dues. The victim was assaulted and forced to call his associate for ransom. Acting on a tip-off, police laid a trap and arrested one of the suspects when he arrived to collect the money, leading to the victim's rescue and the arrest of the remaining accused.

In another incident in January, Hebbagodi police arrested three people for abducting a goods vehicle driver in H Hosahalli village. The accused allegedly assaulted him with a hockey stick, robbed him of Rs 1,500, and demanded an additional Rs 50,000, threatening to kill him.



As per the new guidelines, auto tipplers have been instructed to transport wet, dry, and sanitary waste separately. *DH PHOTO/BK JANARDHAN*

BSWML not to collect mixed waste from homes or businesses

BENGALURU, DHNS

Strict penalties

- Domestic users can be fined Rs 1,000 for failing to segregate waste as per SWM Rules.
- Waste collectors may face a Rs 2,000 penalty for collecting mixed waste from the public.
- The BSWML is authorised to enforce these penalties.

In a bid to improve waste segregation levels in the city, the Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Ltd (BSWML) has decided not to collect mixed waste from houses and commercial establishments.

It has also issued instructions to garbage contractors, junior health inspectors, supervisors, and marshals to create awareness about the segregation of waste at source among citizens.

As per the new guidelines, auto tipplers have been instructed to transport wet, dry, and sanitary waste separately.

Waste segregation across the city currently stands at around 50%, with some wards achieving over 90% segregation levels, while others remain far below the average.

Speaking to *DH*, BSWML CEO Karee Gowda said he would call a meeting of active citizens to promote segregation at source in the city. “We will first hold an online meeting with citizens and subsequently plan a gathering at Town Hall. By engaging with citizens, we hope to ensure

the city is cleaner and free of black spots,” he said.

In the second phase, the BSWML plans to penalise people who mix waste.

As per the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules, Gowda said the BSWML is authorised to impose a penalty of Rs 1,000 on domestic users for failing to segregate waste. Additionally, the BSWML has the authority to fine waste collectors Rs 2,000 for collecting mixed waste from the public.

The rules also prescribe penalties for littering, handing over waste to unauthorised collectors, spitting, urinating, open defecation, and committing other acts of public nuisance.

NGO takes on Bengaluru's flyover fiasco

BENGALURU, DHNS: Members of Greenpeace India put up banners at stalled infrastructure sites in the city on Wednesday, questioning the government's development promises, with the flyovers at RR Nagar and Dommasandra among the key projects targeted.

The banners carried caricature art questioning if the “stupid projects” were the development the government had promised.

‘A city for people or pillars?’, ‘Is this our children's future?’ and ‘Is this development?’ were among the slogans on the banners.

Authorities have poured nearly Rs 325 crore into the Dommasandra flyover along Sarjapur Main Road, between Kodathi and Sarjapur. The 1.4-km flyover, which had an initial deadline of 18 months, remains incomplete after six years.

Despite repeated petitions and representations from local residents' welfare associations, the project remains stuck.

Campaigner Vaishali Upadhyay said both locals and commuters felt fatigued by the stalled projects.

“The Dommasandra flyover has been pending for six years, people complain that it is more congested than before,” she said. “There is



Activists turn stalled flyover pillars into a canvas of protest at Rajarajeshwari Nagar arch on Wednesday. *DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V*

fatigue among both local residents and commuters because they have to travel through the stalled projects.”

She said Rs 300 crore of public money had been wasted on the project with zero benefit to the public. “The project needs better planning. It should be people-centric,” she added.

Work on the RR Nagar flyover began in 2022, but, except for four pillars, the project has not moved forward — Rs 71.45 crore has been spent on it.

“It is the same situation here, too. Commuters say congestion has increased, not reduced. What makes it more absurd is the lack of transparency, planning and responsiveness,” Vaishali said.

Three junctions, one lesson: City roads need a rethink, says study

BENGALURU, DHNS

A joint study by the Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP), the Institute of Road Traffic Education, and Diageo India has identified key engineering and enforcement gaps at major city junctions, underscoring the need for coordinated interventions to ease congestion and improve road safety.

The study examined traffic conditions at Chalukya Circle, Cantonment Railway Station Junction and H Siddaiah Circle, chosen to reflect administrative, transit, and mixed-use zones.

Using traffic volume analysis, behavioural observations and safety audits, it found inefficiencies in traffic flow, pedestrian movement, and road design.

Among the key findings are irregular lane usage, unsafe pedestrian crossings, and sub-optimal signal placement, which contributed to delays and safety risks.

The report recommends low-cost engineering measures, including improved lane channelisation, pedestrian refuge islands, clearer signage, and better signal optimisation to improve intersection performance.

Karthik Reddy, Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic),



Traffic conditions were analysed at Chalukya Circle (shown), Cantonment Railway Station Junction, and H Siddaiah Circle. *DH FILE PHOTO*

Bengaluru City, said traffic management cannot rely solely on enforcement.

“Greater coordination between planning, engineering, and enforcement agencies along with a focus on both vehicular movement and pedestrian safety will be pertinent to improving traffic efficiency and making roads safe for all,” he said.

Training programme
A two-day training programme for traffic police personnel was conducted recently as part of the initiative.

The sessions focused on traffic engineering principles, road safety audits, and the application of motor vehicle regulations in real-world con-

- Recommended low-cost measures**
- Improved lane channelisation
 - Pedestrian refuge islands
 - Clearer signage
 - Better signal optimisation

ditions. The aim is to improve on-ground decision-making and enable officers to better identify systemic issues.

The study proposes a scalable model for other intersections, combining research inputs with practical design changes and capacity building to address congestion and safety concerns in a rapidly growing urban environment.

CRIME CLAMPDOWN

Operation Suraksha: City cops nab over 1,500 offenders

ASHWIN BM BENGALURU, DHNS

In a major push to reclaim the city's streets from anti-social elements, the Bengaluru City Police (BCP) has launched ‘Operation Suraksha’, a coordinated drive against public nuisance, drug peddling, and habitual offenders.

Since the operation began in late 2025, city police, along with the Central Crime Branch (CCB), have booked over 1,500 people and executed pending warrants against absconding accused.

The crackdown targets sensitive areas where groups gather late at night to consume narcotics or harass passersby.

Srihari Babu BL, Deputy Com-



The crackdown targets sensitive areas where groups gather late at night to consume narcotics or harass passersby. *DH FILE PHOTO*

missioner of Police (Crime 1), said joint teams have been conducting night patrols to identify habitual offenders who disturb public peace.

“Following the initiative of our Commissioner and Additional Commissioner (Crime), we have created specialised teams headed by two inspectors each night.

Crackdown on chaos

- **Public peace:** 1,586 cases filed under the Karnataka Police Act, 1972, against people creating nuisance in public spaces.
- **Narcotics:** 158 cases registered for the sale and consumption of drugs, with police conducting spot consumption tests.

They cover four to five designated hotspots per shift, starting at 10.30 pm and continuing until 3 am,” the DCP told *DH*.

The patrol units, including an Armed Reserve van and a City Relief van, pick up offenders and take

- **Warrants:** 30 absconding accused traced and arrested after evading the law for months.
- **Arms Act & BNSS:** One case booked under the Arms Act; eight people booked under sections 126 to 129 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS).

them to the CCB police station for interrogation and verification.

Street crime
The officer said the heightened vigil has led to a dip in opportunistic street crimes.

Incidents of chain snatching and mobile thefts, which often rise during late hours in poorly lit areas, have come under control since the drive began.

“We are constantly focusing on budding rowdies and nuisance creators,” DCP Babu added.

“If they participate in NDPS (drugs) or other serious offences, we register FIRs. For minor public nuisance cases under the Karnataka Police Act (Section 92), we provide counselling and issue notices before letting them go.”

The move has been welcomed by citizens, particularly in areas such as Indiranagar, Koramangala and Hebbal, where late night noise and unruly behaviour have been a recurring concern.

BDA's flyover proposal in Jarakabande forest gets nod

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bangalore Development Authority's (BDA) proposal to construct a flyover within the Jarakabande Reserve Forest — aimed at reducing the forest land required for the long-delayed Bengaluru Business Corridor project — has received approval from an expert committee.

In a revised application submitted to the Expert Appraisal Committee of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, the au-

thority stated that the forest land required for the eight-lane Peripheral Ring Road project has been reduced from 19.10 acres to 7.05 acres.

“However, following discussions with the Forest Department, and in an effort to minimise forest land diversion, it was decided to propose an elevated corridor across Jarakabande Reserve Forest in Yelahanka Hobli, Bengaluru North Taluk, involving diversion of 2.8551 hectares (7.05 acres).”

MBP seeks express train between B;luru and Vijayapura

BENGALURU, DHNS: Industries and Infrastructure Development Minister MBPatil has urged the Railways to introduce the long-pending express train between Bengaluru and Vijayapura now that the work on the 9.6-km Almati-Wandal double line has been completed.

In a letter dated March 30 to Union Minister for Railways Ashwini Vaishnaw and Union Minister of State for Railways V Somanna, Patil referred to an earlier meeting wherein the possibility of introducing an express train between Bengaluru and Vijayapura upon the completion of work on the Almati-Wandal double line had been discussed. Patil urged both the ministers to consider the issue on priority.

The train will benefit thousands of people from Vijayapura and Bagalkot districts travelling to Bengaluru for various purposes, including education, administrative work and business, said Patil.

It takes 15 hours to travel between the two cities, which Patil opined was inconvenient, stressing the need to reduce the duration of the journey to 10 hours. He also called for limiting the number of stops between Bengaluru and Hubballi, and routing the train via Hubballi and Gadag bypass lines.

Cong MLA flags lapses in IPL ticket distribution

MANDYA, DHNS: MLA P Ravikumar expressed disappointment over the sales of tickets for the Indian Premier League (IPL) matches held in Bengaluru in the black market. IPL tickets have become like gambling. He charged that there are no proper basic facilities at the stadium, but the tickets are sold at ten times higher than the original price.

Addressing media persons here, he said, "We are happy to conduct the IPL matches in Bengaluru. But selling the tickets in black is not right."

"There is no proper drinking water facility in the stadium. They have turned the stadium into a money-making machine. The authorities should, at least now, pull up their socks and provide all facilities for cricket enthusiasts," he urged.

"The way MLA Vijayanand Kashappannavar sought tickets for the IPL matches may not be right. But what he asked is right. I gave my two tickets to cricket enthusiasts from the economically weaker sections. They have given tickets to the MLAs like alms. I am ready to stand in a queue and buy tickets with my money. But, where are the tickets available? I may have the capacity to buy a ticket for Rs 50,000. What about the poor?" he asked.

Census 2027 begins; CS, DG & IGP self-enumerate

Submit demographic details online over next 15 days

BENGALURU, DHNS

The first phase of the National Census 2027 started in the state with Chief Secretary (CS) Shalini Rajneesh and DG&IGP M A Saleem leading by example by completing their registration on the official portal (se.census.gov.in).

The self-enumeration facility – introduced by the Union government as part of Census 2027 – allows citizens to submit their demographic details online over the next fifteen days.

After completing the exercise, Shalini Rajneesh urged all

residents to utilise the official portal to complete the process, which is simple, secure and citizen-friendly.

Sharing her experience, she noted that the process took just 5 to 10 minutes and required only a mobile number and OTP verification.

Upon completion, users receive an application reference number. This number can be shared with enumerators who will conduct door-to-door visits between April 16 and May 15. The reference enables quicker verification and allows for corrections, if required, the govern-



Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh

ment said in a press note.

Saleem said he completed self-enumeration just by using the smartphone, indicating that the process was simple and easy to use.

For those without access to mobile phones or computers, the chief secretary advised us-

ing computer centres in their neighbourhood or assistance from friends and family to complete the process and obtain the reference number.

Describing the census as a critical exercise for the country's progress, she said the data would be used for framing new policies and programmes.

"Accurate data will guide resource allocation in key sectors such as healthcare, education, housing, and infrastructure," she said, urging citizens to participate actively.

In Bengaluru, officials are preparing to onboard about 20,000 enumerators for door-to-door visits that start on April 16.

The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) is coordinating with five city corporations in preparatory work, which includes demarcation of blocks, each comprising 200 houses. Government officials and

How to self-enumerate?

- Log in to the portal - se.census.gov.in - with your mobile number, get OTP and type it in the specified place.
- Select location, mark your house on the map, fill in household details and submit to get the reference number.
- Share the reference number with the enumerator during their visit to your house.
- Field verification starts on April 16 and goes on till May 15.

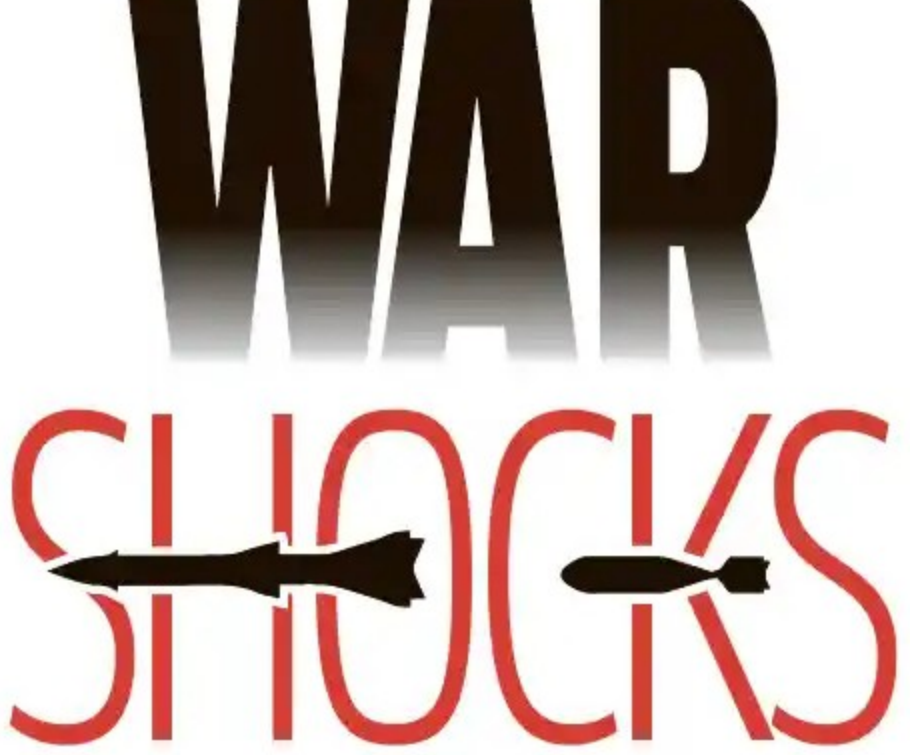
teachers will be roped in as enumerators, Bengaluru Central City Corporation Commissioner P Rajendra Cholan said.

Commercial gas cylinder price hike increases burden on hoteliers

SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

The price of commercial gas was increased by Rs 202 applicable from April 1. With this, in just the last one month, the price of commercial gas has gone up by Rs 497. The hoteliers in the city are reeling under pressure owing to the soaring prices. The hoteliers were offered a Rs 150 discount and this was also cancelled in March, adding to their burden.

Unable to bear the burden, most of the hoteliers may start increasing the prices of food items soon, industry experts said. "The hoteliers have been waiting patiently even through the crisis. But constant increase in price of commercial gas cylinders along with hike in power tariff and other operational costs may force us to increase the prices. However, we have asked the individual hoteliers to take a call based on their financial situation," P C Rao from the Bruhat Bangalore Hotels



Association (BBHA), told DH.

Owing to the crisis, over the last few weeks, a few hoteliers have already increased the prices of many food items on their menu.

Many hotels have also switched to alternate cooking setups, including specialised kitchens for firewood cooking, and this has resulted in investments which also need to be recovered through rise in prices, one of the hoteliers said.

While the customers might start seeing an increase in prices at a few hotels from tomorrow, prices at a few other eateries might remain the same as a few hoteliers might decide to wait and see how the situation develops.

Commercial LPG prices soar

- March 1: Rs 1,844
- March 7: Rs 1,959
- April 1: Rs 2,161

"There are also rumours

that the prices of petrol and diesel might also go up after elections. This might impact the price of all the raw materials. Hence, a few hoteliers want to wait and increase the price based on that as well. They cannot increase the price again and again," Rao said.

'MRPL produces 45L kg LPG per day'

MANGALURU, DHNS: Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited (MRPL) Director (Refinery) Nandakumar V Pillai said that the MRPL was running its refinery at 120% of its capacity, and LPG production had increased by 30%.

Pillai was speaking during a workshop on "Maritime Adversities and the Role of Stakeholders," organised by New Mangalore Port Authority, in the city. He said that with the increase in LPG production, the MRPL was now producing 45 lakh kg of LPG per day, which is approximately 10 lakh cylinders.

"Earlier, we were producing 35 lakh kg per day before the Iran-Israel war," he added.

The increase in oil prices in the international market is a major concern. "It was around \$69 per barrel in February,

which has now increased to \$128 per barrel. Diesel is the costliest commodity in the international market today," he said.

"The MRPL is sourcing crude oil from wherever possible to ensure that the supply of crude and the functioning of critical infrastructure in the country continues," he added.

Tankers to arrive with LPG at NMP

LPG tanker Aurora with 43,910 tonnes of LPG is expected to arrive at New Mangalore Port on Thursday. According to New Mangalore Port Authority (NMPA), Confidence Petroleum will receive the cargo.

Another LPG tanker Al Ain with 23,000 tonnes of cargo is also expected to berth at New Mangalore Port on Thursday. HP/IOC/BPCL will receive the cargo, sources said.

Visible dip in number of autos plying on roads

Commuters go for bike taxis

ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

The number of autos on city roads saw a dip on Wednesday, as rented auto drivers were forced to push the brake on their vehicles, given the rise in LPG prices.

Drivers who rent autos pay between Rs 300 and Rs 350 on average per day.

"With LPG prices soaring, it is impossible for drivers who rent autos to survive even for a day. They need at least Rs 450 to Rs 550 worth of LPG. And after spending hours waiting in line to fill up their tank, they're barely able to cover the cost. They're paying more for rent and gas, compared to what they're earning every day," said C Sampath, general secretary of the Adarsha Auto Drivers Union.

He added that of the 14,000 members in his association, about 10% halted operations on Wednesday.

"The numbers are likely to go up in the coming days," he added. As of April 1, gas stations in the city were charging Rs 85 per litre for LPG, on average. Long queues were a common

sight at government-run gas stations in Koramangala, Madiwala, Mysore Road, with customers having to wait for an hour.

Muzzamil Pasha, 48, is planning to find a part-time job to make up for his loss.

"I rent my auto for Rs 350 every day. For the last three days, I have been working without making any profit. Today, I have finally decided to temporarily halt operations instead of incurring more losses. Instead, on a part-time basis, I'm planning to work at my brother's restaurant," he said.

As a result of the dip in the auto fleet, commuters on Wednesday had trouble booking autos across various aggregator platforms. Many, eventually, turned to bike taxis.

"For the last few days, I have been grateful that bike taxis are back in the city. After struggling to get an auto for 30-40 minutes in the morning as well as the evening, I am now opting for bike taxis. They are not only easily available, but also economical compared to the exorbitant prices auto drivers are demanding," said Ayushi Jain, an engineering student.

Commuters opting for autos stressed that it has become "close to impossible" to book a cab on ride aggregator platforms without adding a tip of over Rs 50, especially during the evenings.



Autorickshaws queue up outside an LPG filling station on St Marks Road to refill tanks amid LPG shortage and limited stock availability in Bengaluru on Wednesday.

DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR

NOT A PROBLEM

Biogas relieves villagers from LPG cylinder worries

RAJU GAVALI
BELAGAVI, DHNS

At a time when domestic LPG cylinder users are worried about getting a refill due to the raging war in West Asia, people residing in the villages under Bambarga Gram Panchayat in the taluk are a relieved lot.

Biogas units installed in the village about three decades ago are generating the fuel required for them. This has made them self-sufficient in these troubled times.

Bambarga Gram Panchayat covers Bambarga, Kattanbhavi, Gugranatti, Godihal, Hosur, Goramatti, Ningenatti, old-Idalhond and new-Idalhond (rehabilitation of Hidkal Dam project affected) villages. Till the 1990s, residents of these villages were using firewood for cooking. They were getting the trees on the surrounding hillocks felled to meet their needs. It had also posed a threat to the environment. Environmentalist Shivaji Kaganikar came to



Former gram panchayat member Mahadevi Mangutkar and secretary C K Talwar at the biogas unit installed three decades ago at Bambarga village in Belagavi taluk.

DH PHOTO/EKANATH AGASIMANI

Kattanbhavi village in 1990 to conduct night school for dropouts and adults and kindergarten classes. While residing in the village, he came across the felling of trees on the hillock and being used as firewood.

Through Jana Jagaana Samsthe, he created awareness among the people to use biogas as fuel and save the forest. As most of the villages had livestock and dung could be used as a source for biogas and slurry could be used as

manure, he told them. Kaganikar said he used his personal rapport with the villagers and was successful in making the villagers set up biogas units in their backyards. More than 80% houses at Kattanbhavi have biogas units.

Later, the villages in the surroundings followed suit. Now, biogas has made the households self-sufficient in cooking fuel, along with them getting manure too.

Renuka Kumanache, a res-

Biogas units

- Bambarga - 225
- Kattanbhavi - 230
- Gugranatti - 80
- Godihal - 15
- Hosur - 50
- Goramatti - 25
- Ningenatti - 48
- Old-Idalhond - 80
- New-Idalhond - 140

ident of Bambarga, said, "We got the biogas unit installed in our house 15 years ago. It has been meeting the fuel needs of our house. Domestic LPG cylinders were an alternate fuel source for us."

Gram Panchayat former member Mahadevi Mangutkar said the biogas unit was installed at her house 35 years ago and is still functional.

"Earlier, we had a big, undivided family and never fell short of cooking fuel. Slurry is used as manure in our agricultural lands," she added.

Panchayat Development Officer Sunita Patil said,

"Since assuming charge, I have not come across demand for LPG cylinders in our jurisdiction. More than half of the houses have functional biogas units."

Gram Panchayat Secretary C K Talkwar said the Gram Panchayat's jurisdiction is spread across nine villages and the population is 6,990.

"Among the 1,679 households, 893 have installed biogas plants. They have domestic LPG cylinders as an alternate fuel source to meet needs during emergencies, hence they are not affected even due to a shortage of domestic LPG cylinders," explained.

Environmentalist Dileep Kamat said, "Khadi and Gramodyog Industries Corporation has encouraged biogas plants. Kaganikar, too, received the training. Belagavi district today has the highest number of working biogas plants. Livestock here has ensured dung availability and slurry is being used as manure."

Lamborghini case: HC orders inquiry against motor vehicle inspector

BENGALURU, DHNS

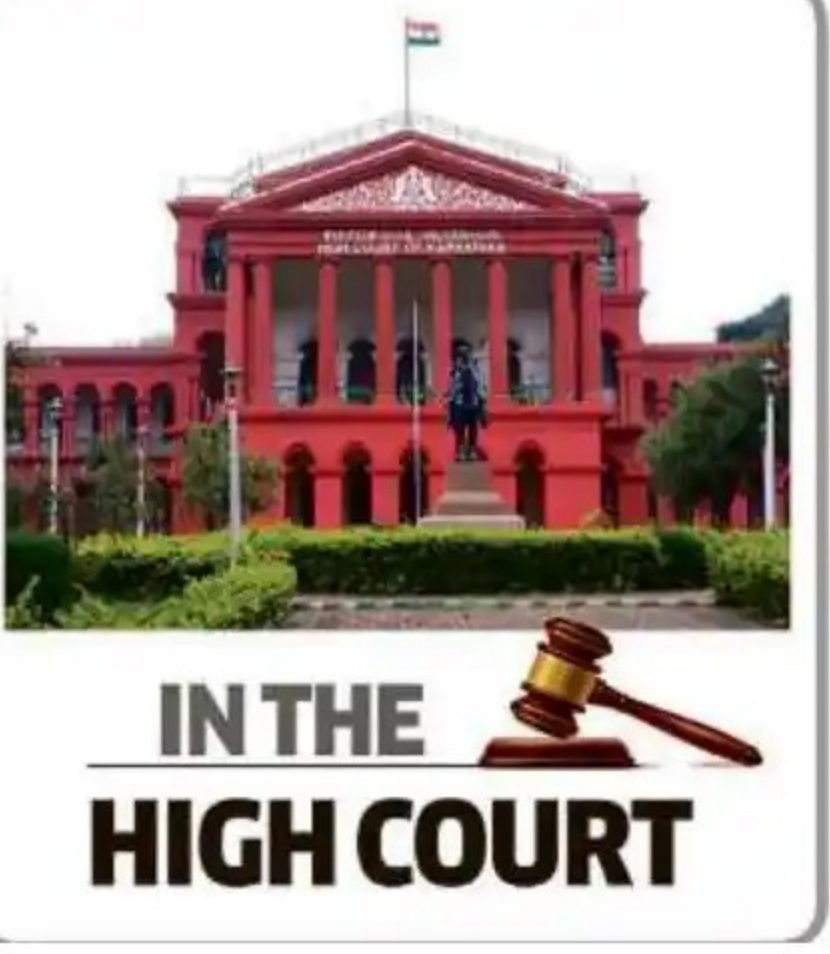
The High Court of Karnataka has ordered a departmental enquiry against a transport department official for acting "in flagrant disregard of law" while seizing a Lamborghini Huracan.

Bengaluru South Senior Motor Vehicle Inspector Ranjith N had entered the owner's house garage on February 7, 2026, and seized the luxury car without any prior notice.

"The sequence of actions by the second respondent (Ranjith) has left the procedure stipulated in law topsy-turvy. What emerges is a situation where no lawful demand has been determined, no notice is served upon the petitioner calling upon him to make good the alleged deficit in tax and yet the most drastic measure – seizure of the vehicle – is resorted to at the very threshold. A remedy that the statute contemplates, as a last resort, has, in the case at hand, been deployed as the first," Justice M Nagaprasanna ruled, partly allowing the car owner's petition.

The petition was filed by HI Car Care, an automobile body parts dealer and the car's owner. The petitioner claimed to have registered the car in 2025 with the Indiranagar RTO by paying all taxes.

However, the state accused the vehicle owner of "forging" the documents and causing losses to the exchequer. Police subsequently registered a case of forgery and cheat-



IN THE HIGH COURT

ing and promised investigations against the RTO officials involved.

The court noted that the RTO officer proceeding to personally effect seizure of the car from within the petitioner's premises traverses the boundary between accusation and execution.

"It must, therefore, be held that although the officer has, in effect, committed a legal hara-kiri by disregarding the governing provisions, the quashing of the crime will not operate as a licence to the petitioner to escape liability, if any, under law. Liberty is thus reserved to the state to proceed afresh, strictly in accordance with law and with due observance of the procedural safeguards. Equally, the undertaking furnished by the state public prosecutor that those responsible for deletion of the records in the Regional Transport Office shall be brought to book must be given full effect," the court stated while quashing the proceedings against the petitioner and directing the authorities to return the seized vehicle.

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INVITATION FOR SHORT-TERM E-TENDERS FOR KIMSH & RESEARCH CENTRE
Ref. :- EC meeting dated 21/11/2023, 02/04/2025, 02/08/2025, 28/01/2026 & 30/01/2026
Purchase Committee of Rajya Vokkaligara Sangha Invites Tenders from eligible tenderers for following tenders in two cover bid system from Manufacturers / authorized agencies. Through E-Procurement Website: <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>

1) SUPPLY OF LINEN ITEMS	9) SUPPLY OF UROLOGY, PEDIATRIC SURGERY, RESPIRATORY MEDICINE, SURGICAL GASTROENTEROLOGY, EMERGENCY MEDICINE EQUIPMENT'S AND INSTRUMENT'S
2) SUPPLY OF COMPUTER HARDWARE (DESKTOP PCS/ PRINTER/SERVER/ LAPTOPS & XEROX MACHINE) ALONG WITH OPERATING SYSTEM AND OTHER PERIPHERALS INCLUDING INSTALLATION, TESTING AND COMMISSIONING	10) SUPPLY OF ICU, ANESTHESIA, OBG & PEDIATRICS EQUIPMENT
3) SUPPLY OF MRI MACHINE ON TURNKEY & BUY-BACK BASIS	11) SUPPLY OF INSTALLATION & MAINTENANCE OF TELEVISIONS
4) SUPPLY OF 128 SLICES CT MACHINE ON TURNKEY & BUY-BACK BASIS	12) SUPPLY OF SUPER SPECIALITY EQUIPMENT'S
5) SUPPLY OF LABORATORY EQUIPMENT'S	13) SUPPLY OF ORTHOPEDICS EQUIPMENT'S
6) SUPPLY OF DERMATOLOGY, NEPHROLOGY, OPHTHALMOLOGY EQUIPMENT'S	14) COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT OF AIR CONDITIONERS AT KIMS HOSPITAL
7) SUPPLY OF MEDICAL IMAGING EQUIPMENT'S	15) SUPPLY OF CATH LAB ON TURNKEY & BUY-BACK BASIS TO KIMS HOSPITAL
8) SUPPLY OF HOSPITAL FURNITURES	16) SUPPLY OF FLAT PANEL RADIOGRAPHY & FLUOROSCOPY SYSTEM BUYBACK & TURNKEY BASIS TO KIMS HOSPITAL

➤ Tender documents can be accessed through the e-procurement portal : <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>

➤ The supplier may download the e-tender documents from 02/04/2026 onwards.

➤ Pre-bid Meeting on 08.04.2026 from 10.00 am to 5.00 pm

➤ Last Date for Submission of Tender : Up to 16.04.2026.

➤ Technical Bid opening on 18.04.2026

➤ The tender will be processed through the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal

Sd/- Chairman HDC	Sd/- Chairman Purchase	Sd/- Treasurer RVS	Sd/- Jt. Secretary RVS
Sd/- Gen. Secretary RVS	Sd/- Vice President 1 & 2 RVS	Sd/- Hon. President RVS	Sd/- President RVS

Upendra launches digital democracy platform

BENGALURU, DHNS: Kan-nada movie star Upendra launched a digital democ- racy platform called ‘The Real Prajaakeeya’, which lets citizens participate directly in governance.

At the app’s launch in the city on Wednesday, he urged people to celebrate mindful thinking on April 1, widely regarded as Fool’s Day.

Citizens can log civic issues in their area, such as water and sewage prob- lems, job issues, safety con- cerns public infrastructure issues, and environmental concerns, among others.

Through the app, Upen- dra urged citizens to select a candidate for the election. Once elected as a public rep- resentative, the candidate must use the app and web- site to perform their duties according to the SOP (Stan- dard Operating Procedure).

When faced with criticism about the idea’s superficial- ity, he said he would keep try- ing his best to bring about a change in society and urged everyone to give the app a chance. He added, “I will not become a leader; you should become the leader.”

In 2018, the actor launched the Uttama Pra- jaakeeya Party, a regional political party.

DH tried reaching Upen- dra for comment but could not get through before press time.

Techie drowns in River Cauvery

SRIRANGAPATNA (MANDYA DIST), DHNS: A software en- gineer from Bengaluru met his watery grave in the River Cauvery, at Yedamuri near Belagola in Srirangapatna taluk, Mandya district, on Wednesday.

PVignesh (27), an employ- ee of Infosys, son of Pandian, a resident of Ramamurthy Nagar, Bengaluru, is the deceased. Officials said that Vignesh, along with three of his friends, had come for a picnic to Yedamuri falls. Vignesh had entered the river for a swim, when he drowned.

Karnataka to levy lifetime tax on electric cars, withdraw exemption

Rate to range from 5% to 10% based on vehicle cost

BENGALURU, DHNS

Karnataka is set to levy a lifetime tax on all electric cars and buses, withdrawing an exemption in- troduced to promote cleaner mobility.

Under the revised structure, the tax will range from 5% to 8% based on the vehicle cost.

Cars priced up to Rs 10 lakh will pay 5% while those costing between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 25 lakh will have to fork out 8%. Electric cars priced beyond

Rs 25 lakh already carry a 10% road tax.

The move marks a sig- nificant policy shift and has sparked concerns over its potential impact on EV adop- tion.

Vehicles that are already registered will pay between 93% and 25% of this lifetime tax based on their age. For ex- ample, a two-year-old vehicle will pay 93% of the tax while a vehicle that’s 15 years or older will pay 25%.

The new tax will apply to



Lifetime tax for EVs	
Vehicle cost	Tax rate
Up to Rs 10 lakh	5%
Rs 10-25 lakh	8%
Above Rs 25 lakh	10%
Conventional vehicles (Floor Area up to 5 m)	
Vehicle cost	Tax rate
Up to Rs 5 lakh	13%
Rs 5-10 lakh	14%
Rs 10-20 lakh	17%
Above Rs 20 lakh	18%

motor cars, jeeps, omnibus-

es and private service vehi- cles powered by electricity. Two-wheelers will continue to be exempted.

To enable taxation, the state has introduced the Karnata- ka Motor Vehicles Taxation (Amendment) Bill, 2026. The bill has been passed by the Leg- islative Assembly and will now be taken up by the Legislative Council. For EV taxations, the amendment revises provisions under Section 3(1), Part 5(a) of the Karnataka Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, 1957.

The state has also revised tax rates for other vehicle categories, including motor cabs, commercial tractor-trail- ers, construction equipment vehicles, vehicles fitted with air compressors and generators, and vehicles mounted with drilling rigs or air compressors

with drilling rig units.

The state expects to ge- nerate around Rs 250 crore in revenue from these changes in 2026-27.

According to the bill’s state- ment of objects and reasons, the amendments are aimed at improving tax compliance and reducing defaulters.

However, the decision has drawn criticism. In a letter to the Governor, Sivaram G, a retired State Bank of India employee, termed the move “retrograde”, arguing that it runs counter to national efforts to promote electric mobility.

He warned that higher tax- es could discourage EV adop- tion and make it harder for India to meet its climate com- mitments, including reducing air pollution levels by 50% by 2030.



Common early signs of autism include poor eye contact, lack of response to name, and delays in speech and motor development. DH FILE PHOTO

Detection gaps, stigma, treatment costs hit fight against Autism

'Ideal age for screening is between 18 and 24 months'

AMULLYA SHIVASHANKAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

From dismissing early signs as “late bloom- ing” to hiding conditions due to stigma, children with autism are still not diagnosed early, doctors say ahead of World Autism Awareness Day observed on April 2 (Thursday).

The high cost of therapies and limited access to trained specialists have significantly contributed to delays in diag- nosis, they said.

Common early signs of au- tism include poor eye contact, lack of response to name, and delays in speech and motor development.

According to the Diagnos- tic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders’ Fifth Edi- tion, published by the Amer- ican Psychiatric Association, the ideal age for screening is between 18 and 24 months.

“Delayed diagnosis usual- ly leads to poorer outcomes as the brain’s neuroplasticity reduces with age,” said Dr Sharath Babu M D, Associ- ate Consultant in Paediatric Neurology.

“Neuroplasticity is the brain’s ability to reorganise its structure, function and connections in response to learning and experience.”

Highlighting systemic

gaps, Prof Dr N Karthik Nagesh, programme direc- tor of a paediatric centre of excellence at a private hospital, said: “High assess- ment costs, limited access to trained specialists and long waiting periods contribute to delayed diagnosis. Many families cannot afford private care, while public systems are often overburdened, making timely support difficult.”

Besides gaps in healthcare and low public awareness, support groups point out that social stigma further delays diagnosis as many parents struggle to accept the condi- tion.

“There are multiple mis- conceptions,” said Ruby Singh, president of the Au- tism Society of India. “Some parents fear social stigma and believe their family’s sta- tus will be affected, wrongly thinking that autism is a hope- less condition. Others believe it can be cured.”

According to her, while most schools in large cities are better equipped than before and public awareness has also improved over time, significant gaps remain. There is a need for stronger, multi-level support systems in both society and education institutions, she added.

Dr Kajol Roy, an IT profes- sional-turned-Director of Sa- maavesah Foundation-Early Intervention Autism Center, said: “Many people believe children will be okay once they are admitted to school and mimic other children. While the number of centres in the city has increased, ther- apy costs remain very high.”

“While lack of awareness continues to be a challenge in rural areas, limited par- ental involvement and failure to recognise early signs in urban settings also contrib- ute to delayed detection,” she added.

Bag ‘scam’: HC orders govt to allow FIR against IAS officer

BENGALURU, DHNS

The High Court of Karnataka has directed the state govern- ment to allow an FIR against IAS officer Rohini Sindhuri regarding irregularities in procuring eco-friendly bags for distribution in the Mysore City Corporation and other local bodies.

The irregularities pertain to 2021 when Sindhuri was the Mysuru deputy commissioner. Sindhuri, a 2009-batch of- ficer, is accused of approving the bag procurement from the Karnataka Handloom Development Corporation (KHDC) at Rs 52 apiece, in- stead of the prevailing market rate of Rs 13, causing a loss of Rs 5,88,58,320 to the ex- chequer.

Justice M Nagaprasanna stated that merely exonerat- ing an officer in departmental proceedings cannot by itself foreclose the initiation of a criminal investigation based on the same facts.

“The complaint registered was neither vague nor specu- lative. It did set out, with clarity and documentary support, an allegation that prima facie dis-

Back and forth

Dec 17, 2021: ACB seeks DPAR’s approval under Section 17A of the PC Act to register FIR against Sindhuri.

Sept 19, 2022: Approval was declined.

Feb 20, 2025: HC remits the matter back with direc- tion to reconsider and pass orders in accordance with law.

May 26, 2025: Approval was declined again, cit- ing departmental inquiry which exonerated Sindhuri

closes abuse of the office and consequential financial loss to the state. If such material does not even warrant the grant of approval to initiate investiga- tion under Section 17A (Pre- vention of Corruption Act), this court is constrained to ponder what would. The statutory safe- guard under Section 17A is not intended to stifle legitimate in- quiry into serious allegations of corruption, it is designed to prevent frivolous harassment not to foreclose accountabil- ity,” he ruled.

Approval under Section 17A is mandatory to register the FIR in cases where the allega- tion pertains to a decision tak- en in the discharge of official functions.

In his complaint before the then Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), Mysuru, lawyer and so- cial activist N R Ravinchand- re Gowda stated that the bags were procured from the KHDC at Rs 52 apiece, while they were selling for Rs 13 in the retail market. As a result, the exche- quer lost Rs 5,88,58,320, he added. He further alleged that funds earmarked for welfare schemes of the poor in gram panchayats were diverted to the procurement.

The ACB sought the govern- ment’s approval under section 17A to register a criminal case but the request was rejected on September 19, 2022.

The complainant challenged this in the high court, whose coordinate bench remitted the matter back in February 2025, directing that it be re- con- sidered afresh in accordance with law.

However, the government declined the approval again on May 26, 2025, with verbatim

like the earlier order, except the statement that the officer has been exonerated in a de- partmental enquiry.

Justice Nagaprasanna noted that the approval was sought in a complaint which prima facie discloses elements of corrup- tion. “The controversy that arises for consideration in the present, is one that strikes at the very heart of public probity. It concerns allegations of cor- ruption and consequent loss to the state exchequer. What is projected is not a mere admin- istrative lapse, but a decision whose ramifications alleged- ly extend to grave financial detriment to public funds. A cloth bag available in the open market at a modest price of Rs 13 per unit is sought to be pro- cured at an inflated rate of Rs 52 per bag, pursuant to a deci- sion attributed to the Deputy Commissioner,” he said.

The court further said that departmental proceedings and criminal prosecution operate in distinct spheres. It also said that a further remand of the matter would serve no fruitful purpose and would only pro- long the process to the detri- ment of justice.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

For and on behalf of President of India, Principal Chief Electrical Engineer, Southern Railway, Chennai -03, invites e-tender for the following work. The tender shall be submitted online upto **15.00** hrs on **04.05.2026** through website **www.iरेps.gov.in**

Bidders will be able to submit their original/ revised bids upto closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored and summarily rejected. Bidders are requested to go through the details such as pre-bid conference, submission of original documents, Bid security etc. in the attached tender documents.

EMD and Tender forms cost (TFC) are to be paid online through IREPS portal (**www.iरेps.gov.in**) and no manual payment will be accepted for this tender.

S No.	Tender No.	Name of the work	App. Cash value (₹)	Earnest Money Deposit (₹)	Period of Completion
1	E28III-Solar-Land-RESCO-2	Setting up of Land based Solar Power Plant over Southern Railway under Developer (RESCO) mode	521.48,54,656.00/-	4,27,20,000.00/-	240 days

Detailed Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) and the tender documents are available in the website **www.iरेps.gov.in** and the tenderers are advised to refer the same. Tenderers are also advised to quote their rates inclusive of GST.

Chief Electrical General Engineer,
O/o Principal Chief Electrical Engineer,
Chennai-600003

JHARKHAND URJA SANCHARAN NIGAM LIMITED

(CIN No. – U40108JH2013SGC001704)

GOVERNMENT OF JHARKHAND UNDERTAKING OFFICE:

General Manager (CRITL/O.E)
JUSNL Building, Kusai Colony, Doranda, Ranchi-834 002 (Jharkhand)
(E-mail: cecritd.jusnl@rediffmail.com) Website:www.jusnl.in

e-Tender notice
e-NIT No.- 01/PR/JUSNL/2026-27

Jharkhand Urja Sancharan Nigam Limited invite Bids (to be submitted in the e-Procurement Portal) for the following works:

Name of work	Design, Engineering, Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of Line Differential Protection for underground 132/33 Kv Grid Sub Station, Irba (Sikidiri) to sikidiri Switchyard (SRHP) transmission line on turnkey basis.
Estimated cost (Rs.)	Rs.1,10,08,967/- (Including GST and other charges)
Earnest Money Deposit	Rs.2,20,200/-(Including GST)
Completion Period	03 (Three) months
e-Tender fee	Rs. 11,800/- (Including GST)
Start Date & Time of Download the Tender Documents	02.04.2026 at4: 00PM
Start Date and time of upload of BID	02.04.2026 at4:10 PM
Pre-Bid Meeting	08.04.2026, at4:00 PM
End date and time of upload of BID	22.04.2026at4:00 PM
BID Opening date for Technical Part	23.04.2026 at4:00 PM
BID Opening date for Financial Part	Will be communicated
Procurement Officer and address for communication	General Manager, (CRITL/O.E), JUSNL Kusai Colony, Doranda, Ranchi – 834002

Detailed Invitation of Bids which includes instruction for submission of Bids and all other relevant information is available on <http://www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in>. Bidding Documents are also available online. Any details required in this regard can also be has from the office of the undersigned (+91-9471736495) during office hours.

The firms that technically qualify will be informed for date of opening for financial part of Bid.

Bidders are advised to note the minimum qualification criteria specified in bidding document. Interested bidders may participate in the bidding process as per instruction given in the bidding document.

OFFICER INVITING BIDS: Sd/-
General Manager (CRITL/O.E)
JUSNL, Ranchi

स्वहित एवं राष्ट्र हित में ऊर्जा बचाव। कृपया अपनी शिकायत को 18003456570 (कॉल सेंटर) पर दर्ज कराएं।
PR.NO.376426 Jharkhand Urja Sancharan Nigam Ltd(26-27):D

Government of Jharkhand Water Resources Department

Nepal House, Doranda, Ranchi

Advertisement (3rd Call)

File No:- 2/PMC/Misc-68/2003 (Part-III)..... /Ranchi, Dated:-.....

1. The formation of the First Jharkhand Water Resources Commission was notified vide resolution no.-462, dated-13.06.2025.

2. In light of the above resolution, Water Resources Department (WRD), Government of Jharkhand (GoJ), Ranchi, invites applications in the enclosed format for the selection of full-time members (technical personnel) on a contract basis for the establishment of the First Jharkhand Water Resources Commission.

3. Honorarium, Qualification, Experience and Upper Age Limit is as following:

S. No.	Name of Post	No. of Posts	Honorarium per Month (in Rs.)	Qualification	Experience	Upper Age Limit
1.	Water Resources Development Specialist	1	1,80,700	BE/BTech/B.Sc. Engg. in Civil Engineering Discipline. Preference will be given to ME/MTech/M.Sc. Engg./Phd having specialization in the field of Water Resources Engineering.	Minimum 20 years academic/field experience in the field of Water Resources Development (Not below the rank of Chief Engineer)	62 Years
2.	Hydrology Specialist	1	1,80,700	BE/BTech/B.Sc. Engg. in Civil Engineering Discipline. Preference will be given to ME/MTech/M.Sc. Engg./M.Sc. Geology with specialization in Hydro Geology / Phd having specialization in the field of Integrated Water Resource Management.	Minimum 20 years academic/field experience in the field of Integrated Water Resource Management with focus on Ground Water Development and Management (Not below the rank of Chief Engineer)	62 Years
3.	Soil Conservation/ Agriculture Specialist	1	1,80,700	BE/BTech/B.Sc. Engg. in Agriculture Engineering. Preference will be given to ME/MTech/M.Sc. Engg./Phd having specialization in the field of Soil water Conservation/Agronomy.	Minimum 20 years academic/field experience in the field of Soil water Conservation / agronomy (Not below the rank of Chief Engineer)	62 Years
4.	Water Resources Development Specialist	2	1,69,900	BE/BTech/B.Sc. Engg. in Civil Engineering Discipline. Preference will be given to ME/MTech/M.Sc. Engg./Phd having specialization in the field of Water Resources Engineering.	Minimum 20 years academic/field experience in the field of Water Resources Development (Not below the rank of Superintending Engineer)	62 Years
5.	Hydrology Specialist	2	1,69,900	BE/BTech/B.Sc. Engg. in Civil Engineering Discipline. Preference will be given to ME/MTech/M.Sc. Engg./M.Sc. Geology with specialization in Hydro Geology / Phd having specialization in the field of Integrated Water Resource Management.	Minimum 20 years academic/field experience in the field of Integrated Water Resource Management with focus on Ground Water Development and Management (Not below the rank of Superintending Engineer)	62 Years
6.	Soil Conservation/ Agriculture Specialist	1	1,69,900	BE/BTech/B.Sc. Engg. in Agriculture Engineering. Preference will be given to ME/MTech/M.Sc. Engg./Phd having specialization in the field of Soil water Conservation/Agronomy	Minimum 20 years academic/field experience in the field of Soil water Conservation / agronomy (Not below the rank of Superintending Engineer)	62 Years

4. Honorarium is based on notification no.-1284, dated-03.05.2023 of the Finance Department, Government of Jharkhand and is subject to change as per latest notification of the Finance Department, Government of Jharkhand.

5. The services of Full Time Members shall be rendered for the tenure of the Commission i.e. two (02) years (24 months). The tenure of two (02) years shall be counted from the date of first meeting of the Commission.

6. The Full Time Members shall be responsible to function as per the requirements of Terms of Reference (ToR) of the First Jharkhand Water Resources Commission. The Terms of Reference of the Commission can be accessed via resolution no.-462, dated- 13.06.2025, published in the e-Gazette of Jharkhand vide extraordinary gazette no.-273, dated- 20.06.2025 at: <https://egazette.jharkhand.gov.in/>

7. These full-time members shall be selected by the State Government on recommendation of a high-level selection committee.

8. The calculation of age will be done with reference to 01.08.2025.

9. Eligible candidates shall be intimated to appear for interview before the high-level selection committee along with their application with C.V. in the application format available at departmental website having URL: <https://wrđ.jharkhand.gov.in/>, and original certificates.

10. Candidates having requisite qualification may submit their application along with C.V. in the application format available at departmental website to the undersigned, latest by 30.04.2026 up to 5:00 P.M, through speed post e-mail.

11. TA/DA shall not be payable for attending the interview.

12. No Claim for regularization can be made for any post at any point of time.

13. The decision of the High-Level Selection Committee shall be final and binding on all. The committee reserves all rights to select or reject any/all of applications/candidates at any time of selection process.

14. The hiring of the Full-Time Members shall be done purely on contract basis and WRD, GoJ, reserves all rights to dispense the services of these Full-Time Members before the completion of tenure, if found unsatisfactory.

15. The notice, the format of application and resolution no.-462, dated-13.06.2025 is also available on the departmental website having URL: <https://wrđ.jharkhand.gov.in/>

(Bijay Kumar Bhagat)
Joint Secretary (Engg.)
Water Resources Department Government of Jharkhand, Ranchi
E-mail ID:- jseceng-wrđ-jhr@nic.in

PR 376395 Water Resource(26-27):D

PM SHRI KENDRIYA VIDYALAYA, AFS, YELAHANKA, BENGALURU:560063

Website:<https://afsyelahanka.kvs.ac.in>,
Mail:kvafsyel63@gmail.com, Phone: 08029721121

ADMISSION NOTICE: 2026-27

1. Offline Registration for Admission to Class Balvatika -3 and Class XII (Science & Humanities) for the Academic Year 2026-27 will commence at 10:00 am on 02.04.2026 and will close at 4:00 pm on 08.04.2026. The details of admission are available on website <https://afsyelahanka.kvs.ac.in>

2. Minimum age for admission in Class-Balvatika - 3 will be 5 years but less than 6 years as on 31.03.2026.

3. Fresh admission in class XII will be only for Priority Category I & II.

Sd/-
PRINCIPAL

S. E. RAILWAY – TENDER

Chief Project Manager (GSU), Chakradharpur, S. E. Railway acting for and on behalf of President of India invites E-Tenders against Open Tender : **Tender Notice No. : CKP-GSU-FENCING-26-27-1; Name of work** : "Provision of safety fencing along the track by Metal Beam Crash Barriers, fixed knots fencing Beznal-2000, Prestressed concrete and brick work with RCC column from km233.880 to 515.117 (281.237 Tr.km.-) 13.57 Trk(i) Bondamunda A cabin to D cabin and Bondamunda A 4.25 Trk(m) (ii) Sonakan-Sogra (5.07km) (iii) Bagdehi-Dhutra (4.32 Trkm) between Asanboni Jharsuguda station". **Tender Value** : ₹ 193.55,34,078.71; **EMD** : ₹ 3,87,10,700.00; **Cost of Tender form** : ₹ 0.00; **Date of opening** : 24/04/2026; **Period of Completion** : 12 months; The tender can be viewed at website <http://www.iरेps.gov.in>. The tenderer /bidders must have class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered under on IREPS Portal. Only registered tenderer/ bidder can participate on e-tendering. All relevant paper must be uploaded at the time of participating in e-tendering. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. **NOTE:-** e-Tender forms shall be issued free of cost to all tenderers. (Authority-Rly.Bd's letter No.2020/CE-VCT/3E/GCC/Policy dtd. 16.07.2020).

(PR-01)

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

(CONSTRUCTION ORGANISATION)

Tender Notice No. OHE-CN-DYCEE-25-26-25-240 Dated 31-03-2026

For and on behalf of The President of India, The Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer / OHE, Construction, Southern Railway, Chennai Egmore invites E-Tender for the following works.

Name of work	OHE Modification due to construction of detour line at Mayiladuthurai Yard to connect Mayiladuthurai - Thiruvurur line to Road-3 in Tiruchchirappalli Division of Southern Railway
Tender Value	₹84,94,011.21/-
Bid Security	₹1,69,900.00
Tender closing date and time	23.04.2026 at 15.00 hrs.

For more details visit **www.iरेps.gov.in**

Dy.Chief Electrical Engineer / OHE
Electrical Construction / Chennai-8



सत्यमेव जयते

Government of India



Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship



Skill India
कोशल भार- कुशल भारत

Directorate General of Training

CITS ADMISSION NOTICE - SESSION 2026-27

Admission to courses under **Craft Instructor Training Scheme (CITS)** at National Skill Training Institutes (NSTIs) and Institute for Training of Trainers (IToTs) for the academic **session 2026-27** will be made through **All India Common Entrance Test (AICET)**, scheduled to be held on **31.05.2026**. Applications are invited from eligible candidates for admission to CITS in various trades through the website **www.nimionlineadmission.in** from 18.04.2026 to 10.05.2026. The AICET will be conducted as a Computer-Based Test (online) at various centres across the country.

For more details visit: **www.nimionlineadmission.in**

CBC 63101/11/0015/2526



Last date to submit the applications
10.05.2026

Teachers to be trained by Nimhans on tech addiction

Focus on '5C': craving, control, compulsion, coping, consequences



Dinesh Gundu Rao

BENGALURU, DHNS

Health and Family Welfare Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao on Wednesday announced that teachers across the state will be trained by experts from the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (Nimhans) to identify technology addiction among students.

The training will focus on the '5C' model—craving, control, compulsion, coping, and consequences.

Speaking at a press conference on the recently released

draft policy regulating mobile phone use among students, Rao said, “A structured Training of Trainers (ToT) model will equip teachers with the skills needed to address addiction. This will be implemented across all schools and colleges, including both private and government institutions.”

The policy currently targets students in Classes 9, 10, 11, and 12. Teachers will be trained to identify behavioural and academic red flags and guide students through appropriate referral pathways to counsellors and mental health professionals.

The government also aims to raise awareness among parents through regular guid-

ance and engagement sessions conducted by schools. Additionally, the policy proposes limiting mobile phone usage to less than one hour per day.

“Issues such as anxiety, sleep disorders, and social isolation have been linked to excessive phone use. To address these concerns, we have introduced this policy,” Rao said.

The Health Department has published the draft policy on its website for public feedback. “We encourage the public to share their views. If there are valid suggestions, we will consider them and make necessary revisions,” he added.

The draft policy can be accessed here: <https://hfwcom.karnataka.gov.in/en>.

Feedback can be sent to dd6mhkar@gmail.com and ddehospital-hfws@karnataka.gov.in.

BLR Airport earns Level 5 customer experience accreditation

BENGALURU, DHNS: Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) has received Level 5 accreditation under the Airports Council International Customer Experience programme, the highest tier in the global framework.



Hari Marar

The accreditation was granted after an assessment of the airport's customer experience systems, including passenger services, operational processes, and overall management approach. The framework evaluates airports on service design, customer insights, and stakeholder coordination.

“Achieving Level 5 under ACI's Customer Experience Accreditation programme reflects the discipline and consistency of this approach. This milestone is driven by the collective effort of our airport community, and it strengthens our focus on delivering consistent, intuitive, and differentiated experiences that meet the expectations of a global traveller,” said Hari Marar, MD & CEO, Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL), the airport operator.



A motor trolley inspection is being conducted at Bengaluru Cantonment as part of the statutory inspection. PHOTO: SWR

Cantt-Baiyappanahalli 3rd & 4th rail lines get safety clearance

BENGALURU, DHNS: The newly laid third and fourth railway lines between Bengaluru Cantonment and Baiyappanahalli are ready for train operations following authorisation from the Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS).

Sumeet Singhal, CRS of the Northeast Frontier Circle, Kolkata, conducted a statutory inspection and speed trial on the 4.928-km stretch between Bengaluru Cantonment and Baiyappanahalli West Cabin, including the Bengaluru East station, on March 31 and April 1.

The section has four major bridges (all road underbridges), three minor bridges (Nos 836, 838 and 841), three road overbridges (ROBs), seven road under bridges (RUBs), and three foot overbridges (FOBs).

The work is part of the 19-km Bengaluru Cantonment-Whitefield quadrupling project aimed at easing congestion and meeting rising demand for passenger and freight traffic in the Bengaluru area, according to the South Western Railway (SWR). The Rs 492.8-crore project is expected to be completed by December 2026 or early 2027.

DH

DECCAN HERALD

Please contact for subscription/ service queries

(late receipt, non receipt or irregular supply of newspaper)

9008366666

support@deccanherald.co.in

Man accuses wife of sexual, mental harassment

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 37-year-old man has filed a complaint against his wife alleging sexual and mental harassment, in a rare case registered by the Amruthahalli police.

The complaint was lodged at the Amruthahalli police station on March 17.

The complainant, a resident of Jakkur, said he faced

continuous harassment due to his wife's alleged “perverse sexual demands”.

The FIR states that the woman allegedly sent obscene videos to him and pressured him to engage in physical relations with her friends. The complainant said she harassed him mentally when he refused to comply.

He also said she spoke about her past relationships to humiliate him.

The man further said he had given gold ornaments to his wife before marriage, which she is now refusing to return.

Amruthahalli police have registered a case and investigations are on.

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED

(CIN : U40109KA1999SGC025521)

No. CEE/Tr(O)/Z/HSN/SEE(O)/SEE(O)/AEE-4/K-8/Manpower/2025-26/16559-62

Date: 31.03.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION

(Through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Mode Only)

KPTCL invites bids for the following Services against Indent No.: KPTCL/2025-26/SE2350/Call-2 for Providing Manpower Service of Data Entry Operator and Office Attendant to Operation Division Office, Kavour, Kemar, Hassan, Hebbanahalli & Holenarasipurra & 1 No. Driver to Kavour Operation Division.

The detailed notification regarding subject enquiry in the E-Tendering process can be obtained by logging on to KPTCL website: <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> on or after 02.04.2026. Other details can be obtained from the office of undersigned.

Sd/- Chief Engineer (Elec.), Transmission (Operations) Zone, KPTCL, 3rd Floor, Prasaraana Bhavana, Santhepete, B.M. Road, Hassan- 573201

Karnataka State

Office of the Executive Engineer,

Shimoga Division, Shimoga

No.EE/PWD/Smg/AE-1/IFT-69/2025-26

Dtd: 27-03-2026

Short Term Tender Notification -2 Cover system

Tender invited through E-Procurement version-2 kppp.karnataka.gov.in for the below Indents by Eligible Consultants For needful information please contact Office P.No. 08182 274942 and Helpdesk Ph Nos. 080-25501216/ 080-25501227

Tender documents down loading & submission dates:27-03-2026 to 04-04-2026

3054-04-337-1-10-200 MDR Maintenance

1. Shikaripura Taluk 1 Work (1.No: 35244)

Tender documents down loading & submission dates : Periods to complete the work is up to: 09 Months (Including Mansoon) . If there any changes in published tenders it will be publishing in E-Procurement version-2 kppp.karnataka.gov.in Website only

Sd/-EE, PW Dept Division, Shimoga

DIPR/smg/ksmca/26-2709/0403

ARMY WELFARE EDUCATION SOCIETY (AWES CAMPUS)

NAGARESHWARA NAGENAHALLI, PO-KOTHANUR, BENGALURU-77

Web : www.aifd.edu.in and www.aihmctbangalore.edu.in

EXPRESS OF INTEREST (EOI)

1. AWES Campus, Bengaluru-77, invites quotations from Authorities Dealers/Vendors of Bengaluru for "Operation and Maintenance of 100 KLD Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) at AWES Campus, N Nagenahalli, Kothanur Post, Bengaluru-560 077".

2. The Request for Proposal (RFP) for detailed Scope of Work is available in our web site www.aifd.edu.in and www.aihmctbangalore.edu.in

3. Contact Pers – Dr Thomas Mathew, Mob No 9448050295

BENGALURU CENTRAL CITY CORPORATION

Office of the Executive Engineer (Quality Control), Zone-1, No. 307, 3rd Floor, Annex Building-3, N.R. Square, Bengaluru-560001.

No. EE/QCZ1/TEND/01/2026-27

Date: 01-04-2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION

Pre-Qualification (Only through GoK KPP Portal)

The Executive Engineer, Quality Control, Zone-1, BCCC, Bengaluru on behalf of the Commissioner, BCCC invites tenders for Empanelment of consultants / firm for Project Management Consultancy service for the works taken up under BCCC limits.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work
1	Empanelment of Project Management Consultancy Service for the works taken up under BCCC limits. EMD: Rs. 1,00,000/-.

Calendar of Events:

(1) Tender documents may be downloaded from KPP Portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> from 02.04.2026, 4.00 pm.

(2) Last date for receipt of queries: 14.04.2026 upto 1.00 pm. (3) Date of Pre-bid meeting : 15.04.2026 at 3.00 pm. (4) Last date for submission of tenders: 04.05.2026 upto 4.00 pm. (5) Date of opening of Technical bid : 06.05.2026 at 11.30 am. Further details may be obtained from the above office during office hours or from KPP Portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Quality Control, Zone-1, BCCC

MANGALORE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED

(A Government of Karnataka undertaking)

Corporate Office, "MESCOM BHAVANA" Bejai, Mangalore - 575 004

Ph: 0824-2885759 CIN: U40109 KA 2002 SGC 030425

No: MESCOM/GMAHOPER/29/2024-GM ADM HR//CYS-02

Date: 02.04.2026

Notification

Sub: Publishing of Final Selection List of Junior Powerman Posts - Reg.

Ref: 1. Employment Notification No: KPTCL/B16/44953/2023-24 Dated: 14.10.2024

2. Provisional Selection List Notification No: MESCOM/GMAHOPER/29/2024-GM ADM HR// 216459/2026 Dated: 17.03.2026

3. This Office Notification No: MESCOM/GMAHOPER/29/2024-GM ADM HR// 216460/2026 Dated: 17.03.2026

4. This Office Notification No: MESCOM/GMAHOPER/29/2024-GM ADM HR//CYS-01/2026 Dated: 02.04.2026

In pursuance to KPTCL Employment Notification dated 14.10.2024, the Cut-Off Marks along with the Final Selection Lists of Endurance Test qualified candidates selected on merit on the basis of marks secured in the SSLC/10th Standard for the post of Junior Powerman (NKK) in MESCOM is published in MESCOM Website <https://mescom.karnataka.gov.in>.

Sd/-,

General Manager (A&HRD) (I/c)

For Power Related Complaints & Assistance Call Toll Free Number 1912

MSIL Mysore Sales International Limited

(A Govt. of Karnataka Enterprise)

Chit Fund Division

MSIL House, No. 36, Cunningham Road, Bangalore - 560 052.

Phone No.: 080-22264021-25, e-mail: msilchits@msilonline.com

No.: MSIL/CF/2026-27

Date : 01.04.2026

e-AUCTION NOTIFICATION

(e-Auction Notification, Eligibility Criteria and Terms and Conditions)

e-Auction for Investment of Surplus Funds through e-portal of Government of Karnataka <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>

MSIL, a Government of Karnataka Undertaking invites competitive Bids through e-procurement portal for placing surplus funds in the form of Fixed Deposits.

Schedule of various events for e-auction:

(1) Date of e-Auction Notification: 02.04.2026. (2) Pre-Bid Meeting: 07.04.2026 at 3.30 p.m. (3) Last date to upload the Eligibility Criteria in Annexure-A & Declaration in Annexure-B in the e-Portal: 08.04.2026 at 3.30 p.m. (4) Live Bidding: 09.04.2026 at 2.30 p.m. (5) Date of investment: 10.04.2026 to 13.04.2026

Sd/- Chief General Manager (Chit Fund Division)

Government of Karnataka

Women & Child Development Department

District Child Protection Unit, Vijayapur

Publication of E-Procurement Short-term Tender

Notification has been issued for obtaining e-procurement short-term tender through electronic means as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act (KTPP) 1999 Rules 2000 in order to identify the Human Resource Service for the recruitment of required personnel for Vijayapura District Child Protection Unit, Child Helpline and Bus Stand Child Helpline Office on outsourced basis for the year 2026-27. The details of the notification are as follows.

1) Tender Opening Date: 01.04.2026

2) Last Date for Uploading Tender Form Date: 08.04.2026 Time: 5:00 PM

3) Estimated Tender Value Rs. 75,00,000/-

4) EMD to be paid along with tender Amount to be submitted through e-procurement: Rs.1,50,000/-

5) Date of Opening of Technical Envelope Date: 09.04.2026 Time: 05:15 PM

6) Date of Opening of Financial Envelope Date: 10.04.2026 Time: 05:30 PM

7) For more information contact to officer and address, Phone Number: District Child Protection Officer, District Child Protection Unit, Vivek Nagar West, Vijayapur Phone No. -08352-295261.

e-mail id: dcpcbijapur@gmail.com

Website: www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in

Sd/- District Child Protection Officer, District Child Protection Unit, Vijayapur

ವಾಸಾಸಂಖ್ಯೆ/ವಿಜಯಪುರ/004/ಕೆಎಸ್‌ಎಂಎಂ/2026-27

Government of Karnataka

Ballari Urban Development Authority, Ballari

Office Of Commissioner, BUDA, Near H.R.G. Circle, Ballari-583101. Phone: 273731, Comm (per): 277706

Fax: 278651, Web: www.ballary.uda.gov.in

e-mail: combudably@gmail.com

No: BUDA/BLY/Engg/01/Master Plan-SE0015/CALL-3/2025-26

Date: 31 /03/2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION CALL-3

(Through e-Procurement)

The Commissioner, Ballari Urban Development Authority, Ballari invites tender for the Work detailed in the table from the eligible Registered Consultant's (Contractors) in the Karnataka Public Works Department, through e-procurement portal in Two Cover Tender System as per KTPP Act shall be follows. The tender documents can be downloaded from the website www.KPPP.karnataka.gov.in for any additional information and Queries/Clarifications the tenderers may contact the office of the under signed through phone : 08392-273731 during office working hours or e-Procurement Portal.

Details of Work:

Preparation of Masterplan for Ballari Urban Development Area, Indent No. BUDA/2025-26/SE0015/CALL-3. Estimated Cost (Rs. in Lakhs): 200.00

The Tender Events are as under:

a) Pre-Bid Meeting dated: 08.04.2026 at 11.30 Hrs

b) Last date for Queries/Clarifications: 13.04.2026 at 16.00 Hrs

c) Last date for Submission of Tender: 15.04.2026 at 16.30 Hrs

d) Date of Opening of Technical Bid: 17.04.2026 at 11.30 Hrs

e) Date of Opening of Financial Bid: 21.04.2026 at 11.30 Hrs

Sd/- Commissioner.,

Ballari Urban Development Authority, Ballari.

DIPR/Ballari/2026-27/KSMCA/RO No/06

Karnataka Public Work Department

(A Government of Karnataka Enterprises) O/O Executive Engineer PWD Division, Hosapete, Dist:-Vijayanagara

No:EE/PWD/Dn/Hosapete/TND/ AE-1 /2025-26/4538

Date:- 25.03.2026

Short Term E-Tender Notification

Tenders are invited by undersigned on behalf of the Governor of Karnataka, PWD Division Hosapete, Vijayanagara Dist, for the works notified in the statement below. The bid shall be in One or Two Cover system namely technical bid and financial bid through KPP Portal, following the link <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>.

Sl. No	Work Indent No	Estimate Cost (Rs in Lakhs)	Sl. No	Work Indent No	Estimate Cost (Rs in Lakhs)
Reserved for SC Category					
1	PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT33766	10.00	3	PWD/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT34568	16.00
2	PWD/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT34031	55.00			
Reserved for ST Category					
4	PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT33769	10.00	5	PWD/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT34588	71.97
Reserved for 2-A Category					
6	PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT33879	65.50	8	PWD/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT34793	32.00
7	PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT33780	38.50			
Reserved for Category-1					
9	PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT33782	57.00			
General Works					
10	PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT33880	5.92	23	PWD/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT34572	32.00
11	PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT33877	14.00	24	PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT31951/CALL-2	100.00
12	PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT33875	10	27	PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT34894	100.00
13	PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT33878	20	25	PWD/2025-26/EL/WORK_INDENT33306	250.00
14	PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT33763	10.00	26	PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT32282	224.00
15	PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT33771	12.50	28	PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT34947	200.44
16	PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT33775	20.00	29	PWD/2025-26/EL/WORK_INDENT28680	449.83
17	PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT33779	23.50	30	PWD/2025-26/EL/WORK_INDENT28681	400.00
18	PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT33781	21.00	31	PWD/2025-26/EL/WORK_INDENT33105	192.00
19	PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT33783	20.00	32	PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT31350/CALL-2	200.00
20	PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT33784	31.00	33	PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT30668/ CALL-2	250.00
21	PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT33786	59.00	34	PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT31206/CALL-2	330.00
22	PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT33876	10.00	35	PWD/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT32058	335.00

1.Quarries of Tender On: As Per kppp Portal. 2.Last Date of Tender Submission On: 10.04.2026 @ 16.00 Hours. 3.Tender Opening date On: 13.04.2026 @ 10.30 Hours. 4.Financial Bid Opening Date: As Per kppp Portal.

Note:

If any changes either in Tender date, Retender or any other conditions , Tenderers shall be viewed in kppp Portal, No Separate Advertisement / Notification will be published.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, PWD Division Hosapete, Vijayanagara District.

DIPR/Vijayanagar/2026-27/KSMCA/RO No/02



DECCAN HERALD

ESTABLISHED 1948

Addictive by design: A social media reckoning

Two recent court rulings in the United States against leading social media platforms are likely to reshape Big Tech's engagement with the consumer. A Los Angeles jury accepted a young woman's argument that Meta and YouTube designed their social media services to be addictive, and awarded \$6 million in damages. She cited features which she said drove her into compulsive use, causing depression and excessive stress over her physical appearance. A New Mexico jury imposed a penalty of \$375 million on Meta for misleading users about child safety. These penalties, while not substantial for the companies, have set a precedent in making them answerable for their products' design. The development is being compared with court verdicts in the 1990s that held tobacco companies responsible for manufacturing addictive products and concealing the health risks involved.

The element of addiction in the use of social media has been widely discussed and studied. People involved in the design processes have also spoken about it. Platforms are structured in such a way that they capture the minds of the users, keep them interested, and make them return. The metrics of views, likes, shares, and comments are designed to keep users continuously engaged with the platforms. In some cases, an identification with the make-believe world these platforms create can lead to anxiety, depression, and psychotic conditions. The petitioner in the Los Angeles case, identified by her initials, KGM, testified that she began using social media at the age of six. She developed body dysmorphia, which she traced to her use of beauty filters on Instagram. Internal documents presented during the trial showed that executives at the companies were aware of the risks involved. Despite the minimum-age stipulations, the content was designed for younger children actively engaged with the platforms. Catch 'em young was the business proposition.

Investigation revealed that the charges were valid and the court found that both companies had knowingly violated legal and ethical norms to maximise engagement, and prioritised profit over public health and welfare. Governments worldwide, including in India, have tried to regulate social media platforms. These attempts have invariably run into resistance over free-speech considerations. Regulatory action based on age restrictions has also been mooted. The rulings from the US have provided an opening for countries seeking legal remedies to the dangers of excessive social media use. They should lead to the formulation of strong policies that balance the freedom of social media platforms with their responsibilities to society.

US court rulings may set the tone for global regulation, balancing free speech with user safety

When justice prevails despite the probe

A hefty Rs 4.5 crore penalty imposed on former managing director of the Karnataka Council for Technology Upgradation, V Muniyappa, by a special court in Bengaluru, offers a rare breath of fresh air amid the persistently low conviction rates under the Prevention of Corruption Act. The court sentenced Muniyappa to three years of rigorous imprisonment, finding that he had amassed disproportionate assets amounting to nearly 80% above his known sources of income. What lends this verdict particular significance is the court's unusually sharp indictment of the investigation itself. Judge K M Radhakrishna did not hesitate to describe the probe as "shoddy", going so far as to suggest it bordered on deliberate sabotage. The findings point to glaring lapses: the investigating officer's failure to examine gold holdings or verify the "dubious explanations" of the accused for his assets exposed a probe riddled with complacency. Testimony from officers across departments, including transport, statistics, agriculture, and horticulture, was found unreliable, reinforcing the court's conclusion that they were working under "invisible hands" to shield the accused. Notices have been issued to the officers, asking why disciplinary action should not be initiated.

This case lays bare a more troubling reality. For every conviction that survives judicial scrutiny, many more collapse under the weight of poorly conducted investigations, procedural delays, and, in some instances, apparent collusion. Conviction rates in corruption cases remain stubbornly low, not because such offences are rare or difficult to establish, but because the processes meant to secure accountability are frequently compromised. Investigations drag on – often eroding the evidentiary trail – while delays in sanction for prosecution, hostile witnesses, and frequent transfers of investigating officers further weaken cases. The problem is compounded by the Lokayukta's own credibility, as seen here and in past scandals, including an extortion racket that operated from within the institution.

The way forward lies in structural reform. India's policing system continues to lack a specialised investigative cadre. Without such professionalisation, complex financial and corruption cases are unlikely to be pursued with the rigour they demand. Time-bound investigations, closer judicial oversight, and the use of technology in evidence gathering can help strengthen prosecutions. Equally important is the need to fix accountability within the system: investigative lapses must carry real consequences, not merely judicial rebuke. The Muniyappa verdict shows that the law can still bite, even in a compromised environment. But for it to do so consistently, the system must first ensure that those tasked with enforcing the law do not become its weakest link.

Can a rare conviction in a corruption case help break the cycle of poorly conducted investigations?

American imperialism was always enabled by bipartisan policies. Limiting the story to Trump misdiagnoses the problem

VISHAL R CHORADIYA

Last weekend, Americans in record numbers took to the streets in what organisers called the "No Kings" protests – a nationwide rebuke of Donald Trump's authoritarian instincts, his administration's aggressive deportation campaigns, its rush to war with Iran, and its assault on free expression. The demonstrations were large, impassioned, and understandable. They were also, in a crucial sense, dangerously insufficient.

Trump invites a particular kind of attention. His public statements are blunt to the point of being cartoonish, his contempt for expertise and scientific reason is worn as a badge of honour, and his disdain for diplomatic niceties makes the violence of American statecraft visible in ways that more polished presidents are careful to obscure. It is tempting to read in him a singular villain, a man whose personality alone has bent the arc of American power towards cruelty. But to hold Trump alone responsible for the actions of the American state is to misread what that state actually is, and has long been.

Weeks earlier, Joe Kent, a senior United States counterterrorism official, resigned in protest over the war in Iran. His stated reason was that Iran posed "no imminent threat" to the US, and that the administration had launched the war under pressure from Israel and its American lobby. The candour was remarkable. The underlying reality, however, is not new.

Iran's defiance of American-Israeli dominance in West Asia makes it an obstacle to Israeli expansionist ambitions in the region – and through AI-PAC, the most powerful foreign policy lobbying organisation in Washington, Israel has secured unqualified, bipartisan support across administrations for decades. The worst of Israel's genocidal assault on Gaza unfolded with the full, unwavering backing of the US under President Joe Biden, Trump's Democratic predecessor. American weapons, American diplomatic cover, and American vetoes at the United Nations made the campaign possible. None of that changed when administrations did.

Nor is American interference in Iranian affairs a Trumpian innovation. In 1953, the CIA – working alongside

British intelligence – orchestrated the overthrow of Mohammad Mosaddegh, Iran's democratically elected Prime Minister, in an operation known as Ajax. Mosaddegh had nationalised Iran's oil industry, threatening Western commercial interests. The CIA funded media propaganda, bribed officials, and paid agitators to manufacture political chaos, ultimately restoring the Shah to power. The hostility that defines today's crisis has roots that Washington itself planted, across administrations of every stripe.

The same structural continuity applies to immigration enforcement. During Trump's first term, between 2017 and 2021, Democratic members of



Congress repeatedly voted for omnibus spending bills that included full funding for the Department of Homeland Security and, within it, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The justification was procedural – a complete shutdown would disrupt the Transportation Security Administration and other functions – but the effect was to fund the very apparatus now being used for mass deportations.

Some Democrats even voted to confirm leadership for agencies that implemented the "zero tolerance" policy and the family separation programme they simultaneously condemned at press conferences. The legal framework permitting detention and deportation was never seriously challenged; Democrats called for "humane" enforcement, not structural reform.

An entrenched rationale

On questions of speech and information, the Democratic record is similarly compromised. The Obama administration prosecuted more whistleblowers under the Espionage Act than all previous administrations combined – a pattern that journalists argued produced a chilling effect on national security reporting.

Julian Assange, the founder of

WikiLeaks, spent years in a British prison fighting extradition to the US. This prosecution, initiated under Obama-era legal frameworks and continued under successive administrations, stems from his publishing classified documents that revealed American war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan, including the killing of civilians and journalists. The prosecution of a publisher for publishing was treated by much of the mainstream American press not as a constitutional crisis but as a matter of national security.

That press had itself, a decade earlier, repeated without adequate scrutiny the false intelligence claims that justified the invasion of Iraq, claims about weapons of mass destruction that turned out to be entirely fabricated. The same outlets framed the 2011 NATO intervention in Libya as a humanitarian undertaking, obscuring the devastation that followed.

Undergirding all of this is a racial logic that long predates Trump. American imperial power has historically treated the lives of non-White peoples – in West Asia, Latin America, and Africa – as expendable, their nations as theatres for resource extraction, regime change, and proxy conflict. Trump's rhetoric makes this contempt explicit. Earlier administrations expressed it in the measured language of democracy promotion and humanitarian intervention. The violence was the same; only the vocabulary differed.

This pattern – the bipartisan consensus that sustains American imperial foreign policy, the media apparatus that legitimises it, and the domestic enforcement machinery that both parties have built and funded – is the structure that produces the violence people are now protesting. Trump has not created it. He has only made it louder, cruder, and less deniable. That is merely a difference in tone, not in kind.

The danger of the "No Kings" framing is that it treats the problem as a matter of personality rather than architecture. If the goal is to replace Trump with a more eloquent president who will continue the same alliances, maintain the same enforcement apparatus, and advance the same foreign policy with greater rhetorical sophistication, the protests will have succeeded only in making the machinery more comfortable to look at.

The Empire does not require a king – it requires a consensus. Demanding that Trump go while leaving that consensus intact is not resistance, but self-interest dressed up as righteousness.

(The writer is an assistant professor with the Department of Professional Studies, Christ University, Bengaluru)

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

Of cricket scores and sacred chants

From food and faith to bedtime stories, my *ajji* wove my world

SUSHMA SRIPAD

Ajji was the heartbeat of my childhood – my first friend, my constant companion, and the quiet architect of who I became. Her love for mathematics was extraordinary; she never needed a calculator, and learning from her was both intense and unforgettable. With my twin beside me, I remember how we had only a second or two to answer her questions, or else we would be writing out entire tables again. Mathematics was her music, and she taught us to move to its rhythm.

Cricket was her other great passion. From listening to commentaries of matches on the radio to watching them on black-and-white and later colour

television, she lived every moment of the game. She would carefully record scores to ensure the totals and run rates were accurate, all while giving her own commentary – passionate, witty, and often hilarious. When the Indian team faltered, she felt it deeply. Even after I moved to Australia, she stayed connected, glued to the TV whenever I attended a match in Melbourne, trying to spot me in the crowd. No matter how much time passed, cricket remained a thread in every conversation we shared.

Her cooking was unmatched, each dish an expression of love. We would eagerly wait for her *kai thuthu*, and to this day I still miss her *herekayi hulsopu* – a flavour I have never been able to recreate. She made the best *rave unde*, and our home was always filled with the comforting rhythm of her *Lalitha Sahasranama*.

Ajji was a woman of immense strength and discipline. She worked tirelessly her entire life, moving forward with quiet

resilience. Long before it became widely known, she practised intermittent fasting, eating just once or twice a day. She was deeply devoted to her faith, observing *Ekadashi* and other rituals with sincerity, often in her *medi* attire, gently reminding us not to touch her.

Everything I know about Hindu mythology comes from her. Night after night, she would patiently tell us stories of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* – no matter how many times we asked – never once showing fatigue, only love. She was always in motion, never walking but almost running through life, her energy unmatched and inspiring to all who knew her.

I feel incredibly fortunate that so many of my childhood memories are intertwined with hers. Losing her feels like losing a piece of my childhood itself – something no one can truly prepare for. *Ajji*, you will be deeply missed, but your love, your lessons, and your spirit will always live on in my heart.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

People deserve to know the truth

The government has consistently stated that they have adequate stocks of petroleum and gas to meet our needs. But the shortages and news of migrants going home continue. What they are not informing and taking the people into confidence about is the truth. Are the ships which have brought in the LPG (which would last a few days) being allowed to go back and get more gas and oil? The PM

has been calling the leaders of the Gulf States. Why has he not called his two good friends, the President of the US and the PM of Israel, and called on them to end this war, which is leading the entire world into a huge economic mess? This kind of doublespeak leaves people in a state of shock and disbelief, leading to panic.

Hemachandra Basappa, Bengaluru

protects both consumers and the economy. Transparency in pricing and long-term energy planning should be prioritised to avoid recurring crises.

Mugdha Gairola, Bengaluru

Professional boundaries

Apropos 'Grey zones in classroom conflicts' (Mar 31), the actions of both teachers and the students deserve condemnation, be it for indignation, slurs or profanity. Such acts cannot be condoned, as they disregard professional ethics and the rule of law. When institutions

of higher learning deviate from academic purpose, they lose their space for authentic, liberal, intellectual, and dispassionate discourse. It is imperative that staff are doubly cautious in their choice of words, delivery of lectures and professional boundaries. Administration must ensure clear directives, proper orientation and mentoring for both staff and students.

Albert Smith, Bengaluru

Our readers are welcome to email letters to: **letters@deccanherald.co.in** (only letters emailed – not handwritten – will be accepted). All letters must carry the sender's postal address and phone number.

SPEAK OUT

People are happy wherever our chief minister goes. They receive him happily. It is the Government of India which is against the people of Tamil Nadu.



TKS Elangovan, DMK Spokesperson

You know, to address crowds and make promises does not require very much brains.

Eduard Shevardnadze

TO BE PRECISE



IN PERSPECTIVE

Corporate reform with regulatory risks

While the new bill prioritises economic gains, greater executive discretion may weaken regulatory autonomy

AKHIL YADAV AND NISHANT JAIN

The Corporate Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, is part of a larger effort to ease regulatory compliance, limit criminal sanctions for procedural violations, and enhance the country's efficiency as a viable investment option. The move is not unjustified. In an economy aspiring to strengthen its capital markets and cultivate entrepreneurship, a regulatory regime that is too rigid can have significant economic costs.

However, a critical examination of the Bill indicates that its most significant implications may not be in simplifying corporate governance obligations but in reconfiguring the locus of regulatory authority in the system. Several provisions in the Bill appear to shift corporate responsibility away from rigid legislative guidelines and regulatory autonomy towards executive discretion.

Most of the debate has been centred on amending CSR spending thresholds. However, a more fundamental change appears in the enabling clause, which grants the central government power to exempt 'such class or classes of companies... as may be prescribed' from CSR spending. This appears to make a legislative requirement policy-dependent.

In the Indian context, CSR spending has been a governance requirement but also a quasi-developmental requirement in some sectors. If CSR spending is made contingent upon executive-level classification, rather than legislative standards, there may be a greater tendency for social spending by corporations to be influenced by regulatory cues. This may lead to a diminution in the predictability and normative consistency of CSR spending.

The concern increases as the small company's scope expands, widening the range of businesses considered to have fewer regulations, lower penalties, and easier procedures. There is a possibility that relaxing regulations for small businesses could boost economic activity, but it also leads to a multi-layered system of compliance. A significant segment of businesses might operate under a relaxed governance system, which could affect transparency and investor confidence in mid-tier companies.

The importance of the institutional oversight process is similar. The modified legislative changes for the National Financial Reporting Authority provide for the central government to give policy directions that are binding in nature,

thus handing over to the executive the ultimate responsibility to decide upon policy issues. From the perspective of the theory of regulatory design, the legitimate authority of the oversight bodies depends on the proper balance between accountability and operational autonomy. Tighter control hierarchies without procedural safeguards may result in nominal autonomy.

Credible enforcement

The provisions permitting override of the regulator in cases of deemed public interest increase such concerns. Such power may shape market perceptions of the regulator's autonomy from political interference. In sectors where the quality of financial reporting is a key determinant of market confidence, even limited changes in autonomy can have disproportionate effects.

The establishment of a structured settlement system in cases involving corporate penalties further reflects the Bill's emphasis on administrative dispute resolution. This may promote efficiency and relieve tribunals of some burdens. Nevertheless, there are questions about procedural equality in relation to the executive's role in defining settlement powers, as well as a lack of avenues for appeal. Sophisticated corporations may take full advantage of discretion in enforcing regulations, which may exacerbate existing inequalities in the corporate sphere.

These provisions may represent a significant shift in the regulatory state in India. In many countries, the regulatory state has become increasingly skeletal, leaving much of the responsibility to the executive in the determination of regulations. This also creates concerns around the constitutional role of government in regulatory states.

Corporate law reform in India is inevitable and necessary to contribute to economic development. For India to become a key player in the global economy, it needs to integrate into global capital markets. By providing a more streamlined system of compliance, penalties, and restructuring, corporate law reform can make a valuable contribution to economic development. However, the success of the regulatory state may depend on the credibility of the enforcement authorities. If the discretionary power of the regulatory state increases, a more important contribution may be made to creating a state of regulatory uncertainty rather than procedural clarity. For all investors, corporations, and regulatory authorities, trust in the regulatory state may depend as much on the structure of the state as on the costs of compliance.

The importance of the Bill will depend on the use of discretion in the future. A stronger regulatory state may contribute to economic development, but it may also necessitate considering accountability.

(The writers are students at the Gujarat National Law University, Gandhinagar)

Narrative vs reality: Who controls the story of Kashmir today?

DATELINE Srinagar

ZULFIKAR MAJID

In Kashmir today, the most decisive contest is no longer fought on the streets or across the Line of Control—it is fought over perception. Who tells the story of Kashmir, and whose version is accepted, has become as consequential as any political or security development on the ground. Nearly seven years after the abrogation of Article 370, the dominant national narrative is clear and consistent: Kashmir is calmer, safer, and on a path to normalcy. The evidence cited is visible and, to an extent, verifiable. Tourist arrivals have surged dramatically, with Jammu and Kashmir recording over 2.1 crore visitors in 2023, the highest ever. Infrastructure projects have accelerated, and security agencies point to a steep decline in militancy, with active local militants now in double digits and virtually no

fresh local recruitment reported over the past year, marking a significant shift from earlier cycles of insurgency. Markets remain open, schools function without frequent disruption and public protests—once a defining feature of the Valley—have largely disappeared. Indeed, stone-pelting incidents, which ran into thousands annually around 2016–17, have dropped to near-zero levels in recent years, according to official data. It is a story of stability, reinforced through official data and amplified by a media ecosystem that increasingly reflects the language of governance and development. For many outside Kashmir, it signals closure—a sense that a long and turbulent chapter may finally be drawing to an end. But on the ground, reality resists such conclusions. Conversations in private often carry a nuance that is not always visible in public, hinting at a layered social and political landscape. The quiet that defines Kashmir today is not easily decoded. For the state, it represents control and consolidation. For many residents, it reflects caution and adaptation.

The absence of large-scale protests may suggest acceptance, but it can also indicate a more cautious public mood. Economic signals, too, tell a mixed story. While tourism and construction have generated activity, unemployment remains a concern. According to recent surveys, Jammu and Kashmir's youth unemployment rate has hovered around 14–18%, significantly higher than the national average, underlining the gap between macro-growth narratives and individual opportunity. This gap between projection and perception is where the real story lies. Over the past few years, the state's ability to shape the narrative has strengthened significantly. A combination of improved security, administrative centralisation, and structured communication has ensured that messaging remains consistent. Developmental milestones—new highways, investment summits, tourism growth—are foregrounded, reflecting a governance push to reposition Kashmir's image. Yet, shaping a narrative is not the same as fully addressing the underlying complexities.

Local journalism, long a vital link between ground realities and wider audiences, continues to operate in a changing environment. While the space for reporting remains, it has evolved—with greater emphasis on verification, caution and adherence to regulatory frameworks. This has contributed to a more measured public discourse, even as some nuances of everyday experience may not always find full expression. Legal trends also point to a firmer security approach. Since 2019, hundreds of individuals have been detained under laws such as the Public Safety Act (PSA) and UAPA, according to official data and public records, reflecting the State's emphasis on pre-emptive control. Into this space has stepped a less predictable actor: social media. For young Kashmiris, platforms like Instagram, X and Facebook have become informal spaces of expression. Here, the story of Kashmir appears in fragments—tourism reels, everyday humour, cultural pride and occasionally, subtle expressions of unease. These are not overtly political narratives,

but they complicate the official picture by revealing layers of life that do not fit neatly into binaries. At the same time, the external dimension of Kashmir's narrative remains active. Pakistan continues to frame the region as a site of ongoing repression at international forums. Alongside this, Pakistan is seen by security agencies as continuing attempts to push foreign terrorists into J&K, even as local recruitment has declined. This dual strategy—on the ground and in the narrative space—keeps the conflict dimension alive despite changing realities within the Valley. There is the state's narrative of stability and integration, backed by visible changes on the ground. There is the quieter, less articulated narrative of a society adjusting to new realities. And there is the external narrative that seeks to sustain the image of Kashmir as an unresolved conflict. Each of these narratives contains elements of truth. None of them, on its own, captures the full picture. The risk lies in allowing any one version to dominate to the exclusion of others. A nar-

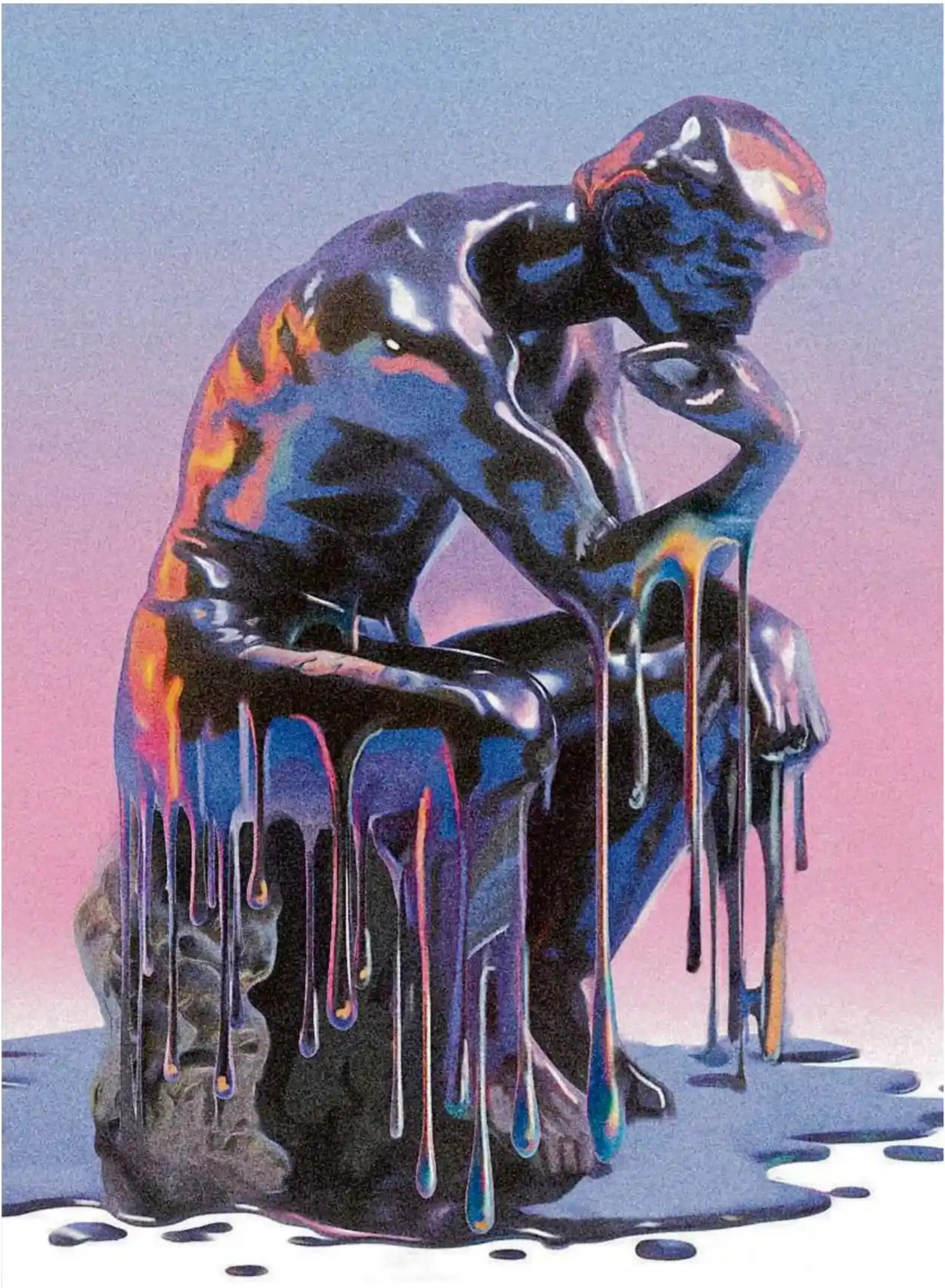
rative that is too tightly framed may achieve clarity, but risks losing depth. Equally, narratives that overlook the shifts in security and development fail to acknowledge how much the ground situation has changed. Kashmir today exists in this uneasy middle ground. It is more secure than it was a decade ago, yet not politically reconciled. It is more open economically, yet more measured in expression. It is quieter, but not conclusively settled. Who, then, controls the story? For now, the State holds a clear advantage in shaping how Kashmir is presented to the rest of the country and the world. Its narrative is structured, amplified and backed by institutional reach. But narrative control is rarely absolute. It is constantly negotiated—in lived experience, in private conversations and in the subtle ways people interpret change. The credibility of any narrative on Kashmir will depend not on how effectively it is projected, but on how closely it reflects the realities on the ground. Because in Kashmir, the story has never been singular—and it still isn't. **DHNS**

As global energy supplies tighten and prices surge, the crisis could yet prove catalytic—forcing governments to accelerate the shift to renewables and electrified systems

JONATHAN MINGLE

Sri Lanka and Myanmar are rationing fuel. The Philippines has instituted four-day work-weeks to conserve gasoline and electricity. Bangladesh briefly closed its universities to reserve power for homes and businesses. Across India, families and restaurants are cooking over wood fires for want of gas. Airlines are cancelling flights. As painful as the first phase of the energy crisis set off by the war with Iran has been, what comes next will be worse. This week, the final deliveries of oil and liquefied natural gas to Asia that passed through the Strait of Hormuz before it was closed are expected to arrive. The last tanker shipments to Europe should land by mid-April. After that, many countries' reserves of gasoline, diesel, liquid petroleum gas and natural gas will dwindle. The price of oil could soar as high as \$200 a barrel if the war drags on. Fatih Birol, the head of the International Energy Agency, has called this "the greatest global energy security threat in history" — much worse than the 1970s oil crisis, the Covid pandemic or Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. This conflict has disrupted a bigger share of the global oil and gas trade, and there is no way to quickly fill the gap. Countries such as India, Indonesia and Vietnam are responding to higher gas prices by burning more coal. But over the long term, this shock will accelerate a turn toward cleaner technologies, especially in Asia and Europe. This is the first oil crisis in which clean alternatives to oil and gas — solar panels, wind turbines, electric vehicles and batteries — are both inexpensive and widely available. The fuel supply crunch has already spurred consumers to embrace these technologies. As the Philippines declared a national energy emergency on March 24, car shoppers in Manila were crowding into showrooms of the Chinese carmaker BYD and purchasing electric vehicles. Solar vendors and installers are reporting a sharp rise in interest from German customers. Heat pump installations are on the rise in Britain. Electric rickshaw sales are booming in Pakistan. Induction cooktops are selling out at online retailers in India. In Vietnam, a conglomerate reportedly wants to abandon plans to build the country's biggest liquefied natural gas-fired power plant and instead pursue a renewables and battery storage project. Since the war started, the stock market valuation of each of China's three biggest battery companies has increased by roughly 20%, or \$70 billion altogether. For governments weighing how quickly to pivot to clean energy, Pakistan's recent history may offer some lessons. The country was hit hard by the energy shock that followed Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. It was unable to afford suddenly exorbitant gas imports, so many of its scheduled shipments were rerouted to wealthier European buyers. But a deluge of inexpensive solar panels from China has transformed Pakistan's energy system and helped insulate it from the current scarcity of liquefied natural

This energy crisis is going to change the world



THE NEW YORK TIMES

gas. Solar now generates nearly 30% of its electricity, up from just 3% in 2020. The Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air has estimated that the solar boom will help Pakistan avoid \$7 billion in fossil fuel imports this year. That's shielding Pakistanis from real pain. With solar, "you can make a major dent on your fossil fuel reliance in a matter of a couple of years," Lauri Myllyvirta, the research centre's lead analyst, told me. That's important because it could be years before the oil and gas supply is restored to prewar levels. After Iranian missiles struck the Ras Laffan liquefied natural gas export facility in Qatar, the country ceased production of the fuel entirely, suddenly taking 20% of the world's supply off the market. Officials predict it will take three to five years to bring that plant, the world's largest, fully online again. Other operators

in the region also cut back on producing oil and gas because they are running out of places to store it all. Those wells can't just be flipped back on like a light switch; it will take months to ramp production back up, creating more pressure to find alternatives. The war will, in some ways, strain the clean energy sector, too. As inflation and interest rates go up, some project developers may struggle to finance new energy installations and grid projects. Supply chains for key items, such as transformers, aluminium and copper wire, now face their own bottlenecks and disruptions. Chaos makes everything—whether you're building polluting energy infrastructure or clean—harder and more expensive. Countries such as India will have to make electric grids built for coal flexible enough to incorporate large amounts of wind and solar. To meet the surge in de-

mand for clean tech, governments must decide how much to invest in their own factories to churn out all those solar panels, heat pumps and electric vehicles and what tariffs to levy on imported versions, according to Tim Sahay, the co-director of the Net Zero Industrial Policy Lab at Johns Hopkins. But countries and firms can build out renewables much faster than they can construct, say, huge gas liquefaction terminals, pipelines and power plants. Achieving energy security is now an overwhelming imperative. That means not just installing more wind, solar and batteries but developing domestic clean tech manufacturing capacity and electrifying home heating and transportation. As their energy autonomy improves, more countries will see drastic reductions in health-damaging air pollution and climate-warming emissions. China has made the most progress along this path: Over the last decade it electrified large shares of its transportation and industrial sectors and cut its oil consumption by over a million barrels per day, giving it a good-sized cushion during the Iran crisis. Chinese companies have pledged to invest more than \$227 billion in other countries' capacity to manufacture EVs, chargers, batteries, solar, wind and other clean technologies, according to a recent report by Sahay's lab at Johns Hopkins. China's reduced exposure to energy turmoil is the fruit of careful planning, Sahay pointed out, dating back to the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, which prompted a long-term rise in oil prices. Future oil shocks are inevitable. "Electrification will be seen as the shock absorber," he said. That option remains available to American consumers, too, who may soon find themselves eyeing electric vehicles and heat pumps — even though the Trump administration has ripped away the incentives that made them more affordable. Just last week, I listened as the US energy secretary, Chris Wright, speaking in Houston at the world's biggest annual energy conference, framed the Trump administration's efforts to encourage oil and gas production as a kind of humanitarian project. "The truth is simple: Energy is life and the world needs massively more of it," he declared. If there's irony here, it's the tragic kind. The administration's war of choice has made energy dangerously expensive in nearly every corner of the globe, causing needless suffering. The most fossil fuel-friendly government in recent US history has shown us all just how risky reliance on oil and gas can be — and taught the world that true energy security lies in accelerating toward a cleaner, electrified future. **The New York Times**

A case for clearer academic honours

T M MANJUNATH

The recent proposal by the Karnataka government, as reported in the media (*DH*, March 19), to constitute a panel to regulate the conferment of honorary doctorates brings into focus an issue that has quietly grown in significance within higher education. While the move to introduce uniform guidelines is timely and welcome, it also presents an opportunity to ask a more fundamental question: is regulation alone sufficient, or is a deeper rethinking required? Honorary doctorates have long been a means for universities to recognise distinguished contributions in fields such as public service, science, the arts, and social leadership. At their best, they symbolise a university's engagement with society beyond the confines of academia. Yet, over time, certain concerns have become increasingly visible. These include the growing frequency of such awards, the indiscriminate public use of the "Doctor" title by some recipients, and, in certain cases, a lack of consistency and transparency in selection criteria. When multiple institutions confer similar honours on the same individuals, questions about uniform standards and intent also arise. The issue is not merely one of misuse but of conceptual ambiguity. Even when clearly designated as *honoris causa*, the term "doctorate" creates a symbolic overlap with earned academic degrees. This blurring of distinction can dilute the value of rigorous academic achievement, which is the result of sustained scholarship and research. In academic practice, the inappropriate use of honorary titles as formal credentials is widely regarded as a breach of etiquette and, in some contexts, misleading. As higher education expands and becomes more competitive, preserving clarity in academic symbols becomes increasingly important. The proposal to regulate honorary doctorates is an important corrective step. Standardisation of processes—covering eligibility, evaluation, and approval—can certainly bring consistency and reduce arbitrariness. However, regulation primarily addresses procedures. It may not fully resolve the underlying concern: whether the current form of recognition itself is best suited to contemporary academic and societal expectations. While regulation can improve how honorary doctorates are awarded, it may not address the inherent ambiguity associated with them.

Several countries explicitly prohibit recipients of honorary doctorates from using the prefix "Dr". India, too, has guidelines discouraging such usage, but these are not enforced. In this context, an alternative approach may merit consideration: a gradual shift from honorary doctorates to a distinct, non-academic honorific framework. One possible model is the conferment of titles such as "Honorary Fellow". Such a designation would be clearly non-academic, yet equally dignified and prestigious. It could be adopted at the university level or even within a broader national framework. Importantly, the field of recognition could be explicitly indicated in the citation—for example, Fellow of Literature and Humanities (FLitt), Fellow of Performing Arts (FPA), or Fellow of Social Science (FSS). This would provide clarity while preserving the idea of honouring excellence. A transition to such a framework offers several advantages. First, it preserves the sanctity and distinctiveness of academic degrees, which are earned through rigorous intellectual effort. Maintaining this distinction is essential for the credibility of higher education institutions. Second, it enhances transparency and public understanding. A clearly defined non-academic honour avoids ambiguity and communicates its purpose more directly. Third, it aligns recognition practices with evolving expectations of accountability and institutional integrity—factors that are becoming increasingly important in a rapidly expanding higher education ecosystem. Importantly, such a shift need not diminish the spirit of recognition. On the contrary, it could strengthen it by placing honours within a framework that is both conceptually clear and publicly credible. The current policy initiative may therefore be viewed not only as an effort to regulate an existing practice, but also as an opportunity to reimagine it. In parallel, the proposed committee could also examine related concerns, such as the growing menace of fraudulent universities and fake degrees, which pose a serious threat to academic integrity. A phased approach—where immediate regulation ensures consistency, and parallel deliberations explore alternative models—could offer a balanced and forward-looking pathway. Systems of recognition must evolve in ways that uphold both excellence and clarity. (*The writer is an agricultural biologist, and consultant—biocontrol, agri-biotechnology and IPM, Bengaluru*)

OUR PAGES OF HISTORY

50 YEARS AGO: APRIL 1976

No threat to freedom of expression

New Delhi, April 1
There is no threat to freedom of expression or other freedoms in India, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi asserted in the Rajya Sabha today. Mrs. Gandhi said people sometimes get confused in their minds that freedom of a few was more important than freedom of the vast majority of the people to go ahead. She had a dig at those who believed that democracy was not suited to India and said they neither knew democracy, nor did they understand India. Mrs. Gandhi said what had of late been happening here was that "democracy was being misused."

25 YEARS AGO: APRIL 2001

Syed's mission was to destabilise South India

Bangalore, April 1
Pakistan-based Deendar Anjuman Chief Syed Zia-Ul-Hassan, who masterminded the serial church blasts in South India last year, also heads a militant outfit called Jamat-E-Hijbul Mujahideen, according to the chargesheet filed by the state police. The chargesheet filed before the III additional chief metropolitan magistrate here on March 19, 2001, states that Zia-Ul-Hassan, who operated from Pakistan's Mardan, frequently visited India on a Pakistan passport and used every such visit to "carry out his subversive activities".

OASIS | RAVI RICHARD

The time for new beginnings

and celebrated by different cultures and traditions all over the world. From a philosophical standpoint, the spring equinox can be inferred as a time where there is an end of hardship (winter) and preparation for a new beginning (spring). It symbolises happiness and sorrow, like light and darkness, needed for self-acceptance and an integral part of our human experiences. The equal day and night metaphorically accentuates the need for attaining a balance or mental anchor of equilibrium, essential for harmony in life. Health and healing can be prioritised



and worked upon, as exposure to natural light during spring can be mood-elevating, boost cognitive functioning, improve sleep patterns and regulate circadian rhythms. Serotonin (happy hormone) levels can get enhanced due to increased daylight, which in turn improves the energy levels, immunity and vigour. Spring becomes the ideal time to reconnect with nature, pursue outdoor activities, and adopt a healthy lifestyle. It is an opportune time for rehabilitation, recovery and renewal for those convalescing from illness, as well as to revitalise themselves—physically, intellectually and spiritually.

For nature lovers, spring is a time of ecological enchantment, observing the major changes in the form of the awakening of the flora from winter dormancy, the journeying of migratory birds and the brimming activity of insects. The increase in food availability creates the right conditions for the breeding of many species. This surge in activity contributes to nutrient cycling and maintaining ecological balance. The arrival of spring has a deep spiritual meaning, illustrated by Easter, the resurrection of Christ—a symbol of the victory of life over death. This dimension carries profound significance in embracing hope, new beginnings and the celebration of life.

SC allows tribunal to verify fresh SIR papers

Court says exclusion from rolls can be remedied

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court on Wednesday said that even if a person is excluded from the electoral rolls in West Bengal and is unable to vote in the upcoming Assembly election, such exclusion, if later found unjustified by the tribunal headed by a former chief justice, can be remedied.

A bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant clarified that the court was not suggesting that every tribunal decision delivered on the final day must automatically be incorporated. However, where rulings extend beyond the cutoff date, inclusion in the supplementary list may not be feasible.

The court emphasised that such rights cannot be permanently extinguished, warning that denying them altogether would create an “extremely oppressive situation”. It permitted appellate tribunals to consider fresh documents in electoral roll disputes, but only after verifying their authenticity.

The bench, also comprising Justices Joymalaya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi, said that if possible, whenever a person approaches for an appeal, he may be supplied with the reason or arrangements.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the petitioners, agreed with the court’s observation. The Election Commission’s counsel said that the poll panel will place the whole record before the appellate authority.

“The appellate authority will have the right to share it with the aggrieved person and also anyone who is participating. Wherever there is a dispute regarding the genuineness, authenticity or validity of a document, let the

BENGAL EXERCISE

- Court stresses remedy for unjust exclusions
- Says voting rights cannot be permanently extinguished
- Tribunals may consider fresh documents after verifying authenticity
- Court notes 47.4 lakh objections disposed of by March 31

tribunal verify it from the official record,” the SC said.

A counsel urged the court to direct the tribunal authority to consider documents or records submitted by the applicant, stressing that clarification was necessary. He added that without such direction, the appellate tribunal might rely only on documents that are not there.

The SC said that on the last occasion, the court made certain comments without being aware of the software’s architecture, which provides a field where officers concerned give remarks and reasons regarding whether the logical discrepancy was justified and deletion warranted, or if it was not justified.

The bench said in such cases, whenever an appeal is filed by an aggrieved person — be it the EC representative who feels inclusion is unjustified or the person being excluded — the reason shall be supplied to the person concerned.

The court said the EC is looking at two different and independent exercises; one is the list on which the election will be held, and the other is the vital constitutional right to vote. The bench noted that approximately 47.4 lakh objections out of a total of 60 lakh had been disposed of as of March 31.

Andhra finally gains statutory clarity on Amaravati as capital

Bill passes Lok Sabha hurdle; Rajya Sabha nod, gazette notification now a formality

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

Nearly 12 years after the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh and amidst at least 45% of overall escalation in cost, the state finally has statutory clarity on its capital.

The Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Amendment Bill, which formally recognises Amaravati as the state capital. Passage in the Rajya Sabha and

an official gazette notification are now a formality.

The Bill brings to a close one of Independent India’s most protracted and politically bruising capital disputes, a saga marked by competing visions, bitter one-upmanship, broken promises to farmers, and a staggering financial toll on an already resource-strained state.

While other newly-formed states like Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Uttarakhand

established working capitals within years, Andhra Pradesh had to wait more than a decade to even gain statutory clarity on its capital.

When Telangana was carved out in 2014, Andhra Pradesh lost Hyderabad — its administrative nerve centre — to the new state.

The then-chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu responded with a blueprint of a Singapore-inspired greenfield capital called Amaravati, spread across 217 sq km along the Krishna river, projected to cost Rs 1.09 lakh crore.

Over 30,000 farmers from 29 villages surrendered approximately 34,000 acres of fertile land under a land-pool-

CITY’S STORY

- Andhra Pradesh lost Hyderabad to Telangana, which was created in 2014
- Then-CM Chandrababu Naidu proposed greenfield capital called Amaravati, to cost Rs 1.09L cr
- But YSRCP chief Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy obstructed the plan with a 3-capital formula after becoming CM in 2019

ing scheme, trusting government assurances of fair compensation and a prosperous future.

In exchange, they were

LS clears Bill recognising Amaravati as Andhra capital

NEW DELHI, DHNS/PTI

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed the contentious Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill, 2026 aimed at overriding an adverse Supreme Court ruling against IPS deputation amid a walkout by the Opposition.

With its passage in the Upper House, the Bill is likely to come up in the Lok Sabha on Thursday.

The Bill was passed by a voice vote after a debate that saw the ruling BJP and the Opposition locking horns over the provisions of the Bill, which also attracted objections from the paramilitary officers. BJP MPs insisted that it was a much-needed reform while Opposition MPs said the Supreme Court order in favour of paramilitary officers had prompted the move.

According to the Bill, 50% of Inspectors General and 67% Additional Directors General in paramilitary forces will be filled by deputation of IPS officers.

The posts in the ranks of Special Director General and Director General shall be filled by deputation only, it said.

The Bill came as the Supreme Court had dismissed the Union government’s plea seeking a review of its 2025 verdict that directed that IPS officers’ deputation in CAPFs up to the level of Senior Administrative Grade (SAG) should be “progressively reduced” in the next two years and asked for a cadre review to be carried out in six months.

Rajya Sabha clears CAPF Bill amid walkout by Opposition



Vice President CP Radhakrishnan, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Deputy Chairman of the RS Harivansh Narayan Singh and MP Sudha Murty during the launch of Murty’s book “Tides of Time”, in New Delhi, on Wednesday. PTI

The Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill, 2026, seeks to create a unified legal framework governing personnel across different CAPF forces, replacing the current patchwork of separate service rule regimes for the five Central Armed Police Forces.

Bill, Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said the Bill resolves several inconsistencies in the service rules, cadre management and appointment-related issues, as well as to boost the efficiency and morale of the armed forces.

He said the paramilitary forces’ domain kept on expanding due to which different rules, guidelines and administrative solutions were adopted, leading to lack of clarity and inconvenience in its implementation, and the Bill

creates an umbrella structure for resolving the anomalies and streamlining its structure for better coordination.

Opposition walks out

The Opposition were unimpressed with the reply and staged a walkout after Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge demanded that the Bill be sent to a Select Committee for further Parliamentary scrutiny. He claimed that the minister did not address issues related to institutionalisation of deputation, adverse impact on morale and career progression, lack of consultation and lack of concern for judicial direction.

Kharge said the Bill was making deputation permanent while limiting leadership opportunities for paramilitary officers and strengthening an unequal service structure. He also said the rigid deputation framework limits promotion opportunities and promotes stagnation in the careers of CAPF officers.

promised between 800 and 1,200 square yards of residential plots and up to 450 square yards of commercial land in fully developed layouts.

Naidu’s track record lent the project credibility. His earlier transformation of Hyderabad’s Cyberabad into a premier IT hub had earned him the reputation of a “CEO chief minister”, and Amaravati briefly captured national imagination.

That momentum collapsed in 2019 when Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy’s YSRCP stormed to power. Jagan abandoned Amaravati in favour of a controversial decentralised three-capital model: executive functions in Visakhapatnam, the judiciary in Kurnool, and the legislature

in Amaravati.

Estimated to cost Rs 15,000 crore, the proposal was widely criticised as politically motivated and seen as a deliberate effort to diminish Amaravati and, by extension, Naidu’s legacy.

The fallout was immediate: The farmers launched a protest that ran uninterrupted for nearly six years. Women marched, families held vigils, and elderly landowners spent sleepless nights.

The Supreme Court ultimately mandated Amaravati as the sole capital, but years of litigation and political paralysis had already exacted an enormous cost in stalled construction, administrative drift, and deepening public cynicism.

Smartphones driving India's electronics sector growth

AJITH ATHRADY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

NEW HEIGHTS

- India’s electronics sector valued at Rs 11.3 lakh cr
- Local production up fivefold, exports up eight times since 2014-15
- PLI scheme for mobiles attracts Rs 17,519 cr investment
- Total mobile production exceeds target by 36%

The Centre on Wednesday said that India’s electronics manufacturing sector, now valued at around Rs 11.3 lakh crore, has seen domestic value addition rise to nearly 18-20%.

The data shared by Minister of State for Electronics and IT Jitin Prasada in the Lok Sabha shows that smartphones — accounting for roughly Rs 5.5 lakh crore of output — emerged as the primary growth engine.

He said the government’s efforts to boost electronics manufacturing have increased local production fivefold and raised exports eightfold between 2014-15 and 2024-25.

The minister added that the production-linked incentive scheme for domestic mobile phone manufacturing attracted over twice the targeted investment at Rs 17,519 crore, while total production exceeded the target by 36%, reaching Rs 8.12 lakh crore.

India now has 300 mobile manufacturing units operational in the country. Smartphones have emerged as India’s top exported commodity in calendar year 2025. Smartphones worth Rs 2.62 lakh crore were exported in 2025, he said.

The data shared by the minister, based on achievements of the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for Large Scale Electronics Manufacturing (LSEM) till February 2026, shows that the total exports under the scheme

have crossed 6.2 lakh crore, which is 27% more than the target of Rs 4.87 lakh crore.

On PLI for IT hardware, Prasada said that a total cumulative production of Rs 18,863.1 crore, total cumulative investment of Rs 872.16 crore and total cumulative employment of 5,039 (direct jobs) have been achieved under the scheme till February.

The minister said that the government has rolled out the Electronics Components Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS) to further deepen the supply chain ecosystem and develop a robust electronics component ecosystem in the country.

He said that 260 applications have been received so far under the ECMS, projecting an anticipated investment commitment of around Rs 1.18 lakh crore.

“As of now, 75 applications have been approved across 12 states under the ECMS scheme. This is expected to attract investments worth Rs 61,671 crore and generate 65,040 jobs,” he added.

Day after PM's Guj visit, local body poll dates announced

SATISH JHA
AHMEDABAD, DHNS

A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s one-day visit, the Gujarat State Election Commission on Wednesday announced the schedule for the local-body elections, which will officially commence on April 6 and will be completed by April 30.

Local self-government elections will be held for 15 municipal corporations, 84 municipalities, 34 district panchayats, and 260 taluka panchayats.

The combined number of seats is 9,992, and the number of voters is 4.19 crore.

Gujarat State Election Commissioner S Murali Krishna announced the dates and schedule for the crucial election, which is set to take place a year ahead of the Assembly elections.

Apart from the ruling BJP and the main Opposition Congress, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is also eyeing a good performance in the elections.

The BJP has launched a “sensing drive” to understand the mood and decide the candidates.

Modi, during his visit, urged people to keep the “superfast express of development moving from panchayat to Parliament”.

On the other hand, the Congress has run several public outreach campaigns to woo voters across the state over the past several months.

Centre sets up control room to track prices amid West Asia war

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Centre on Wednesday has set up a control room to interact with state governments for constant monitoring of prices of essential commodities as the West Asia conflict enters the fifth week.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for an ‘all-out effort’ to safeguard the Indian citizens from the impact of the war and stressed a timely and authentic public information system to ward off any misinformation or rumour-mongering.

The Prime Minister chaired a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) to review measures being taken and interventions across key strategic sectors, including agriculture, fertilisers, shipping, aviation, logistics and MSMEs.



A chef places a pot on a tandoor while preparing food after shifting from commercial LPG to coal due to supply disruptions in Mumbai. REUTERS

The CCS was briefed by the Cabinet Secretary about the action taken to ensure supply of petroleum products, particularly LNG and LPG.

The meeting was attended by key Union Ministers including Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, Nirmala Sitharaman, S. Jais-

hankar and others.

The CCS also reviewed earlier decisions, focused on PNG and uninterrupted LPG supply, assessed fertiliser availability, and deliberated on future strategy.

State governments are being requested to curb black marketing, hoarding, and diversion of fertilisers through daily monitoring, raids, and strict action, the government reiterated in a statement after the meeting.

The Prime Minister also discussed the availability of fertilisers in the Kharif and Rabi seasons. Modi stressed the smooth flow of authentic information to the public to prevent misinformation and rumour mongering.

This was the second special CCS meeting on this issue. The first was held on March 22.

Traffic through Hormuz down to 6-7 ships daily: Navy chief

KALYAN RAY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Since the start of the West Asia conflict, the daily traffic in the Strait of Hormuz has fallen sharply to just 6-7 transits, compared to a pre-conflict average of about 130, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh Tripathi said on Wednesday.

Addressing the naval investiture ceremony in Mumbai, the Navy Chief said about 1,900 vessels are stranded, and more than 23 merchant vessels have been attacked since the beginning of the war.

“The seas are no longer secondary theatres where continental conflicts spill over. Instead, they are becoming the first arena where strategic intent is signalled and contested, often with disproportionate



Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi

consequences,” he said. The Indian Navy has been providing active protection and escort services to merchant vessels and tankers carrying crude oil and LPG once they exit the Strait of Hormuz. Because of the evolving technologies and tactics, the non-traditional challenges are becoming more complex and less predictable to counter. As a result, conflicts are being reshaped.

'Striking Pak'

Months ahead of the first anniversary of Operation Sindoor, Admiral Tripathi said India was “just minutes away” from striking Pakistan from sea

when Islamabad requested a ceasefire.

“We undertook swift deployment and maintained a highly aggressive posture throughout the period. It is not a hidden fact any more that we were just minutes away from striking Pakistan from sea, when they requested stoppage of kinetic actions,” he said.

As the first responder in the region, the Indian Navy swung into action promptly to various humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions at short notice and in challenging conditions — from Operation Brahma in Myanmar, to Operation Sagar Bandhu in Sri Lanka.

The navy inducted 12 ships and submarines last year and is on course to commission at least 15 platforms in the current fiscal.

Lt Gen Dhiraj Seth takes over as new Army Vice Chief

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Indian Army on Wednesday got a new Vice Chief with Lt Gen Dhiraj Seth assuming the charge, while two new General Officer Commanding-in-Chiefs took over the commands at the Army’s Eastern and Western Commands that look after India’s borders with China and Pakistan, respectively.

Commissioned in De-



ccember 1986, Lt Gen Seth, a highly decorated officer from the Armoured Corps, is considered to be a front-runner to be the next Chief of the Army Staff on the superannuation of Gen Upendra Dwivedi in June. He is also one of the very few officers who have the rare distinction of commanding two operational commands along the Western Front.

Earlier in his career, he commanded an armoured regiment in the desert sector, an armoured brigade and a counter-insurgency force in Jammu & Kashmir.

Lt Gen Seth replaces Lt Gen Pushpendra Pal Singh, who assumed the command of the Western Command at Chandimandir near Chandigarh. At Fort William in Kolkata, Lt Gen VMB Krishnan took over as the GOC of the Eastern Command.

At the Southern Command, Lt Gen Sandeep Jain has assumed command, succeeding Lt Gen Seth.

Telangana: 5 linked to fraud ring in Cambodia arrested

HYDERABAD, DHNS: The Telangana Cyber Security Bureau (TGCSB)’s Cyber Crime Police Station (CCPS) has arrested five people from Hyderabad, Warangal, and Uttar Pradesh who were allegedly closely associated with a syndicate operating from Cambodia to defraud Indians.

The arrested have been identified as Rizvan, Syed Ashraf Ali, Syed Sohail, Ateeq Ahmed, and Nune Ashok. According to TGCSB Director Shikha Goel, Syed Ashraf Ali was trying to carry 198 SIM cards to Cambodia on Tuesday on the instructions of Rizvan when the immigration author-

ities intercepted him at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport and handed him over to the TGCSB.

A case under Sections 66C, D of the IT Act and 318(4), 56, 61, 113 read with 62 of the BNS, besides Section 42(3)(e) of the Telecommunication Act, was registered at the CCPS.

During questioning, Syed Ashraf Ali revealed details about the organised network, which includes a mastermind operating from Cambodia, with Rizvan coordinating the SIM-card procurement through local agents, who illegally obtain them from innocent people, said the cops.

RACKET BUSTED

- Arrested individuals were ‘closely associated’ with a syndicate to defraud Indians.
- Over 600 SIM cards had been illegally transported in six separate instances since 2023
- SIM cards were used for cybercrimes like phishing, identity theft.

They added that it was established that more than 600 SIM cards had been illegally transported in six separate

Poll vault

Superstar effect

Apart from C Joseph Vijay, the names of 13 candidates fielded by the TVK in the April 23 Assembly elections begin with "Vijay". Some of them include Vijay Prabhu, Vijay Nirnanjan, Vijay Vadivelu, Vijay R Barani Balaji and Vijay Saravanan – die-hard fans of the 51-year-old actor who prefixed "Vijay" to their names to profess their affection for their superstar. It has also been common among the actor's fans to name their children Sanjay, after the actor's son.

ET B SIVAPRIYAN, CHENNAI

Silent protest

Antony Raju, a former MLA who was disqualified, has not come out in public in support of Sudheer Karamana, the LDF-backed Independent and actor-turned-candidate in Thiruvananthapuram, a seat he represented until recently. The Janadipatya Kerala Congress leader says it would be ethically incorrect for him to campaign as he is disqualified from contesting elections. Incidentally, he was convicted in the 1990s on charges of tampering with evidence in a drug case while representing a foreigner. More than an ethical dilemma, however, there is talk that his absence has more to do with his party's anger with the CPM over not allocating the seat to it.

SHEMIN JOY, NEW DELHI

Meet the leader



Pramod Boro
UPPL
Tamilpur

The chief of the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) is a prominent leader in Assam's Bodoland region; his party has 15 Assembly seats. The UPPL became part of the NDA in 2020, soon after signing the new Bodoland Accord that ended the decades-long insurgency in the region.

Pramod, now 51, joined politics after signing the Accord and was elected the chief of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), comprising five districts. The party, under Boro's leadership, won seven seats in the 2021 Assembly elections, and a UPPL candidate supported by the BJP was elected to the Lok Sabha from Kokrajhar.

Boro had served as president of the All Bodo Students' Union and led the movement for a separate Bodoland state for years before taking to politics.

For the April 9 Assembly elections, the party, however, has decided to contest all 15 seats it currently has on its own after the BJP parted ways with it following its defeat in the BTC polls last year and re-inducted the Bodoland People's Front (BPF), the UPPL's rival. The BJP tried to pacify the UPPL by sending Boro to the Rajya Sabha. However,

Boro took a tough stand and named candidates for all 15 seats in the BTR. He is contesting the polls from the Tamilpur constituency, his home district.

The BJP and the BPF are contesting four and 11 seats of these seats, respectively, but eyes will be on the UPPL's performance and Boro's stand after the elections.



Trivia

J Jayalalithaa, M K Stalin and Edappadi K Palaniswami share an intricate connection with the year 1989. It was in 1989 that all three leaders entered the Tamil Nadu Assembly for the first time – Jayalalithaa from Bodinayakanur, Stalin from Thousand Lights and Palaniswami from Edappadi. All three went on to become chief ministers and later took charge of their respective parties after their leaders passed away. While Jayalalithaa succeeded MGR, Stalin took over from his father M Karunanidhi, and Palaniswami emerged as the leader of the AIADMK after Jayalalithaa's death in 2016, though belatedly.

Lotus looks to bloom again in T'puram

Kerala BJP chief Rajeev Chandrasekhar contesting from Nemom seat

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
DHNS



Rajeev Chandrasekhar during the release of NDA's election manifesto. PTI

Industrialist-turned-politician Rajeev Chandrasekhar made his electoral debut in Thiruvananthapuram during the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, when he was relatively unknown to the common people of Kerala. Even then, he gave Congress leader Shashi Tharoor a tough fight.

Now, as Chandrasekhar seeks a mandate from the Nemom seat in the Kerala Assembly, aiming to reclaim the party's maiden seat, Opposition campaigns branding him an "outsider" seem to be losing steam.

For Vijayan, an elderly man running a bunk shop on Thrikkannapuram Road near Nemom in Thiruvananthapuram, Chandrasekhar is no longer an unfamiliar face. "Rajeev has a better chance here," he says.

However, local residents are not ruling out chances for sitting MLA, CPM leader and Labour Minister V Sivankutty, citing development works in the constituency during his tenure. They point out that the long-pending Nemom-Thrikkannapuram road improvement project has almost

reached its final stages.

At the same time, the ongoing redevelopment of the old Nemom railway station into Thiruvananthapuram-South station is seen as bringing goodwill to the BJP.

While many consider United Democratic Front candidate KS Sabarinadhan of the Congress comparatively weak, undercurrents cannot be dismissed. Hindus form the majority in the constituency, but the possibility of minority vote consolidation against the BJP across Kerala could have repercussions in Nemom as well.

While BJP's O Rajagopal scripted the party's maiden success from Nemom in 2016, UDF candidate V Surendran Pillai of Janata Dal (U) managed only 9.7% of the votes. But in 2021, when BJP's Kumanam Rajasekharan lost to CPM's V Sivankutty, Congress veteran K Muraleedharan secured over 25% of the vote. This suggests that a stronger UDF performance could weaken the BJP's chances.

It is acknowledged even within BJP circles that Rajagopal's victory was not solely due to BJP votes but also his personal appeal. Having contested many elections unsuccessfully, he enjoyed considerable goodwill and rapport across sections of society.

However, the BJP's higher vote share in Nemom during the 2024 Lok Sabha election and the recent local body polls has given the party renewed confidence. The BJP is also visibly ahead of the CPM and Congress in terms of posters and hoardings across the constituency.

With the BJP coming to power in the Thiruvananthapuram Corporation for the first time in the recent local body polls, the saffron party now has high hopes in other constituencies such as Vattiyookavu and Kazhakoottam, where it finished runner-up in the last elections.

In Vattiyookavu, which borders Nemom, Kerala's first woman IPS officer R Sreelekha is seeking a mandate, while former Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan is contesting from Kazhakoottam, home to the Technopark.

The BJP's campaign is centred on PM Narendra Modi's development vision of 'Viksit Bharat, Viksit Keralam'. However, the lack of major announcements during Modi's maiden visit to Thiruvananthapuram is being highlighted by the Congress and CPM to counter the BJP's narrative.

Battle for Beypore: CPM's coastal bastion faces UDF-backed challenge

FROM THE GROUND

KORAH ABRAHAM
BEYPORE, DHNS



PA Mohammed Riyas & PV Anvar

The political script of Beypore has followed a predictable plot over the years as far as electoral contests are concerned. For decades, the coastal constituency in Kozhikode has remained a safe haven or a fortress of sorts for the CPM. But this time around, the contest here is drawing unusual attention.

Sitting MLA PA Mohammed Riyas, Kerala's Public Works Minister and son-in-law of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, faces an aggressive political challenge from PV Anvar, a controversial and outspoken politician now backed by the UDF.

Beypore's electoral history explains why the contest matters. Since the early 1980s, the CPM has held the constituency almost continuously, with leaders such as TK Hamza and Elamaram Kareem building a strong organisational base through trade unions, coastal labour networks and

local party committees.

In the 2021 elections, Riyas won the seat by a margin of more than 28,000 votes, reinforcing the Left's dominance.

The constituency itself is politically diverse. It includes parts of Kozhikode city such as Beypore, Nallalam and Cheruvannur, along with the municipalities of Feroke and Ramanattukara and the coastal panchayat of Kadalundi.

Fishing communities, port workers, small traders, Gulf migrant families and an expanding urban middle class form the core of the electorate.

Community arithmetic has traditionally worked in favour of the Left. Muslims form the single largest bloc, while Hindus — including Ezhava and Thiyya communities that historically leaned towards the Left — make up another significant segment.

By combining working-class Hindu votes with

sections of Muslim support, the CPM has managed to keep the Opposition at bay.

It is this equation that Anvar hopes to disrupt. Once seen as a political ally of the LDF, Anvar was elected from Nilambur in 2016 and 2021 with the support of the CPM-led LDF. However, his relationship with the ruling front deteriorated in recent years following a series of public disagreements with the government and the party leadership.

Accusing sections of the establishment of sidelining him and questioning the concentration of power within the ruling dispensation, Anvar eventually walked out of the Left fold.

His entry into the Beypore contest with the backing of the UDF has turned what was once a routine Left stronghold into a closely watched political battle. Anvar has built his campaign around sharp attacks on the government and on Riyas' political stature, while also attempting to consolidate sections of the Muslim electorate.

The CPM, however, remains confident. Party leaders point to their entrenched organisational network and longstanding support among port workers, fishermen and the urban working class.

BJP may change TN's name if it comes to power, claims Stalin

CHENNAI, DHNS: Raking up the sensitive language issue, DMK President M K Stalin on Wednesday claimed that the BJP won't even hesitate to rename Tamil Nadu as "Dakshin Pradesh" if its alliance partner AIADMK came to power after the April 23 Assembly elections.

To prevent such developments, Stalin told people to exercise their franchise in favour of candidates of the DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance (SPA).

Campaigning for SPA candidates in Tiruchirappalli, one of the DMK's bastions, Stalin tore into the BJP and AIADMK for ignoring the state's interests. He also indirectly attacked TVK chief Vijay by praising his challenger in the Tiruchirappalli (East) assembly seat, Inigo Irudayaraj, as someone who always advocates for minorities.

"He has already mingled closely with the people of the constituency. He's a candidate with real weight and substance," Stalin said. On Tuesday, Stalin alleged that the BJP cobbled up a coalition with AIADMK in state only with a "malicious intention" to stop the state's progress under his administration over the last 5 years.

"If these people come to power, they won't hesitate even to rename Tamil Nadu as Dakshin Pradesh. To prevent this, the entire state of Tamil Nadu must unite as one against the BJP-ADMK alliance," Stalin said.

Modi predicts BJP hat-trick; Priyanka alleges corruption

PM asserts Congress will achieve a century of defeats

GOGAMUKH/BEHALI (ASSAM), PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday launched the BJP's poll campaign in Assam, predicting a "hat-trick" for his party with people's blessings and asserted that the Congress will achieve a "century of defeats" in elections.

He also accused the Congress of planning to bring a law to protect infiltrators if it comes to power, which the BJP and its allies will not allow.

Modi began his day-long campaign with a visit to the Manohari Tea Estate in Dibrugarh district, where he plucked tea leaves alongside women workers and interacted with them. "Tea is the soul of Assam! The tea from here has made its way across the world. It was a very memorable experience," he said in a post on X. His visit to the tea garden ahead of next week's elections in the state assumes significance as the workforce from over 850 gardens in the state forms a formidable chunk of the electorate.

Tea workers traditionally exercised their franchise in favour of the Congress for de-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi plucks tea leaves with women workers at a tea garden, in Dibrugarh. PTI

cadres, but there has been a significant swing towards the BJP since the 2014 Parliamentary polls. In the last two Assembly elections, their votes gave the saffron party a decisive win in tea garden-dominated constituencies.

Addressing a rally at Gogamukh in Dhemajuli district, Modi alleged that the Congress "if it comes to power in Assam, will bring in a law to protect infiltrators, which the BJP will not allow." He claimed that before 2014, the Congress "tried to introduce a law at the Centre" but was opposed by the NDA.

'One family looting'

Meanwhile, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Wednesday took a swipe at Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, alleging that "only one family is looting" everything in the resource-rich state, while the people "don't



Priyanka Gandhi Vadra during a rally in support of the BJP president Lurinjyoti Gogoi in Dibrugarh. PTI

have anything". "One family is looting everything in Assam. And when they are not looting, mines, lands and every other asset are being handed over to big industrialists," Vadra claimed.

Alleging massive corruption on every front during the BJP-led government in Assam, she raked up old scams such as Saradha, Smart City and NC Hills.

"The BJP said they have given a double-engine government. In reality, it is a 'double-ghulam' (slavery) government. PM Modi is engaged in slavery of America's (Donald Trump and Israel's (Benjamin) Netanyahu, and Himanta Biswa Sarma is engaged in slavery of Modi," she claimed, addressing an election rally at Nazira in support of Leader of the Opposition Debabrata Saikia.

She also attacked the state government for failing to fulfil the promise of hiking the daily wages of tea garden workers and providing basic amenities.

'Foreigners' issue can't be resolved if CAA remains'

Elections in Assam without **Prafulla Kumar Mahanta** in the fray were unimaginable. But Mahanta, now 73, has stayed away from the electoral battle since 2021. As the leader of the All Assam Students' Union (AASU), he spearheaded the anti-foreigners' movement (1979-1985) before founding the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and becoming the country's youngest chief minister at 33. He told *DH's* **Sumir Karmakar** that Assam's foreigners problem cannot be solved as long as the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), passed by the Modi government, remains in force.

How do you view the election contest with the BJP and Congress leading two alliances?

I expect a good contest this time.

BJP's narrative revolves around Hindu identity, while Congress is promising to create a Bor Axom (greater secular Assam). What the BJP has been saying is not practical. As for the Congress' stand, they cannot establish Bor Axom — they had several chances in the past.

Your fight was against the foreigners' problem in Assam. The BJP also promised to solve the issue and has been in power for 10 years. The BJP is not moving in the right direction. They have

not taken the necessary steps, and much remains to be done to address the problem. What they have been saying is not applicable in the present scenario.

What is the solution?

The Assam Accord set March 24, 1971, as the cutoff date to deport foreigners. But the CAA goes against the Accord. Their stand undermines the Accord, and the problem cannot be solved as long as the CAA remains.

What is your view about the AGP's role? The party has been with the BJP since 2016.

By staying with the BJP, they have not been able to solve the problem. They cannot. They must take positive steps.

How do you look at the Opposition alliance led by Gaurav Gogoi?

Every election is a challenge. But Gogoi has not yet been able to demonstrate his effectiveness as a leader. This election will be a test for him.

Why aren't you contesting?

It is due to health reasons.



Prafulla Kumar Mahanta

POLL OUTREACH



BJP candidate from Shibpur constituency, Rudranil Ghosh, during an election campaign ahead of the West Bengal Assembly Election, in Howrah, on Wednesday. PTI

ET B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

Until January, the ruling DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance (SPA) appeared cohesive and battle-ready for the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, while the AIADMK-headed National Democratic Alliance (NDA) was far behind in perception and coalition.

Three months later, things have flipped. The AIADMK — which has not won an election since the death of J Jayalalithaa in 2016 — has marched ahead, with its chief Edappadi K Palaniswami hitting the campaign trail ahead of others after alliance talks and announcing



CM MK Stalin interacts with an elderly woman on Wednesday. PTI

candidates for all but 19 seats the party is contesting.

On the other side, the DMK, which took about a month to conclude seat-sharing talks, burnt the midnight oil to select constituents

and seats, finishing the exercise only on March 28 evening.

The DMK may have announced candidates, but its alliance partners had yet to start the process. Nominations can be filed only on four days

between March 30 and April 6 due to public holidays and the weekend.

The AIADMK decided the number of seats for alliance partners during meetings between Palaniswami and Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi and identified the constituencies here. There are strong murmurs that the AIADMK gave many losing

seats to alliance partners, including the BJP.

Seats preferred by former TN BJP chief K Annamalai and a few young leaders were not allotted by the AIADMK, which gave away 15 currently held by DMK ministers — many of them veterans and heavyweights — to alliance partners, inviting criticism whether it

was scared of taking them on. However, on paper, everything remains smooth in the NDA.

Trouble in the DMK-led SPA, stitched together in 2019 and still intact, began in February when the Congress gave mixed signals about

its tie-up with the ruling party and praised newbie politician Vijay and his TVK.

The induction of late actor Vijay-akanth's DMDK into the alliance added to the confusion, as the number of Assembly seats committed to it remained a secret until earlier this week.

The DMK allotted 10 seats and a Rajya Sabha berth to the DMDK, much to the consternation of long-time allies like the IUML, CPM, CPI, and the MDMDK, who were forced to accept fewer seats than they were allotted in 2021. Only the Congress and the VCK got additional seats, that too after protracted negotiations and a public spat.

POLL PERCEPTION

AIADMK ahead of DMK in campaign, but trails on image



TAMIL NADU
Assembly Poll

Parl panel urged to scrap no-confidence motions

NLU members suggest steps to stop Assembly dissolution

AMRITA MADHUKALYA
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Vice-chancellors and representatives of various law universities have suggested to the government that the “no-confidence” motion be done away with to prevent dissolutions of Assemblies and legislatures.

At a meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) formed to review the One Nation, One Election bills, they proposed another system in which an elected head could only be removed if a successor is elected with a majority.

On Wednesday, representatives of the National Law Universities (NLUs) met members of the committee. The JPC had sought constitutional expertise from stakeholders across NLUs, including the

RECOMMENDATIONS

■ Panel reviewing One Nation, One Election bills seeks constitutional expertise from NLUs

■ NLUs urge end to standard no-confidence motion

■ Propose 'constructive no-confidence' to prevent Assembly dissolution

■ Successor must be elected with majority before removal

vice-chancellors of Jodhpur, Odisha, Shimla, Meghalaya, Nagpur and Lucknow, as well as Kochi's National University of Advanced Legal Studies and Patna's Chanakya National Law University.

A primary recommendation was the addition of a clause for a “constructive no-confidence motion” — a parliamentary mechanism that allows a legislature to dismiss an incumbent head of government only if they simultaneously elect a successor by an absolute majority. The system originated in the

German Constitution (Article 6) and aims to provide political stability.

“Unlike a standard no-confidence motion, they suggested, this constructive model will ensure that the House or Legislative Assembly is not automatically dissolved,” a member attending the meeting said.

“Instead, it creates a more stable system by requiring the House to elect a successor simultaneously with the removal of the sitting leader. The universities said that this is a widely accepted international model, successfully adopted in various forms by nations such as Germany, Belgium and Spain,” the member added.

The universities also proposed several technical amendments to safeguard democratic features. These include introducing procedural protections, revisiting the scope of powers granted to the Election Commission and establishing a statutory timeline for re-elections. The universities acknowledged the aim of the bill to enhance administrative efficiency, reduce fiscal burdens, policy paralysis and to strengthen democracy.

Top court halts trial against Durai Murugan in assets case

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Supreme Court on Monday put on hold the trial court proceedings against Tamil Nadu minister and DMK general secretary Durai Murugan in a disproportionate assets case.

A bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan issued notice to the Tamil Nadu government on an appeal filed by Murugan challenging a Madras High Court order.

Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Murugan, sought a stay on the trial court proceedings, contending that similar relief had been granted in another case.

After hearing the submissions, the bench said, “There shall be no further proceedings until the next date of hearing. Issue notice return-

able on April 20.”

In April last year, the high court directed a special court in Vellore district to frame charges in accordance with the law against Murugan and his family members in the disproportionate assets case. The order was passed after the court allowed revision petitions filed by the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC).

The DVAC had challenged a special court order discharging Durai Murugan and his family members in the case. The high court judge observed that since the check period in the case was between 1996 and 2001, the special court should dispose of the matter within six months by conducting the trial on a day-to-day basis.

SC imposes Rs 25k cost on Centre over ‘unnecessary litigation’

NEW DELHI, DHNS & AGENCIES

The Supreme Court on Wednesday came down heavily upon the Central government for indulging in unnecessary litigation and imposed Rs 25,000 cost on it for challenging a Punjab and Haryana High Court order that set aside a CISF official's dismissal.

A bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan referred to the recent statement made at a conference organised by the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) about the government being responsible for the case backlog.

Considering the matter, the bench said, “We fail to understand why the Union of India has challenged the order of the high court division bench.

“We fail to understand why the Union of India has challenged the order of the high court division bench. We hear pendency, pendency. Who is the biggest litigant? Cost should be imposed”

We hear pendency, pendency. Who is the biggest litigant? Cost should be imposed.”

Affirming the high court's order, the bench also granted CISF official Sukhwinder Singh back wages after finding the punishment of dismissal as disproportionate.

The bench asked why there couldn't be an understanding that if the high court found the

punishment disproportionate and granted relief setting aside all orders, the government would not appeal to the Supreme Court.

The court found the official took medical leave but he also had to deal with an elopement in his family.

There were two charges levelled against the CISF official, for absence from duty for 11 days, and that he had committed an act of indiscipline by conniving with a woman, the daughter of a CISF constable, to flee from Mumbai and attend her wedding with his younger brother.

The high court noted that the 11-day absence was explained as the official was on sanctioned medical leave during that period.

Illegal kidney transplant racket busted in UP; doctors among 6 arrested

LUCKNOW, DHNS: Police in Uttar Pradesh's Kanpur busted an illegal kidney transplant racket and arrested six people, including some doctors.

According to police sources here, the racket—whose operations had spread outside the country—had allegedly been involved in more than 50 kidney transplants in the past two years.

Those arrested include a senior office-bearer of the Indian Medical Association (Kanpur unit) and managers of three hospitals, sources said.

The racket was busted after an MBA student lodged a complaint with the police that he

was lured into donating one of his kidneys for Rs 6 lakh by a Kanpur-based broker. The recipient was a resident of Bihar.

The alleged kidney transplant took place on 29 March at a private hospital in Kanpur.

Sources said some doctors from Noida and other places were also involved in the rack-

et, and police teams have been sent to nab them.

The police have registered a case against 15 accused persons under Sections 18 (illegal removal of human organs), 19 and 20 of the Transplantation of Human Organs Act, 1994, as well as Sections 143 and 3(5) of the BNS.

A senior police official said the racket used to purchase kidneys from needy people for Rs 6 lakh to 10 lakh and sell them for Rs 80 lakh to Rs 1 crore.

Police said investigations were on to ascertain if more hospitals and doctors were involved in the racket.

MISCELLANY

◆ COMICS ◆

Blondie



Beetle Bailey



Marvin



Hagar The Horrible



Peanuts



JUMBLE

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

LWODR

DLEAL

TAWSYE

MAROLC

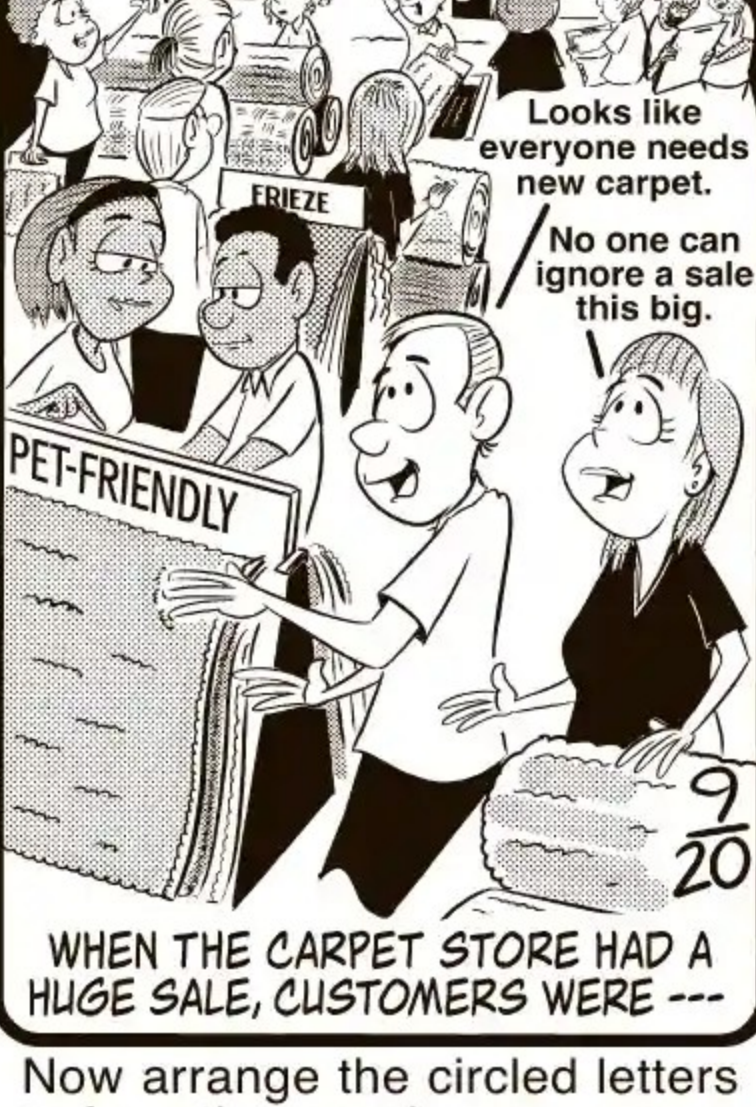
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Ans. here: - - -

Yesterday's | Jumbles: EPOXY NICER WICKER SHIMMY
Answer: When ancient Italians built human-powered warships, they created a — “ROW-MEN” EMPIRE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

◆ SU-DO-KU-6869 ◆

	8	3			6
		6	8		9
	5			3	1
		4	3		5
5			4	2	8
	2		6		1
1		2		4	
	6			7	5
	3			8	2

2	6	9	7	4	8	3	5	1
1	5	8	2	6	3	4	9	7
7	4	3	5	1	9	6	8	2
3	7	1	6	9	2	8	4	5
8	9	4	3	5	1	2	7	6
5	2	6	8	7	4	9	1	3
6	3	7	4	8	5	1	2	9
4	1	2	9	3	7	5	6	8
9	8	5	1	2	6	7	3	4

SOLUTION TO 6868

To solve the puzzle: To solve a su-do-ku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows, and in each of the nine boxes.

HITORI-3323

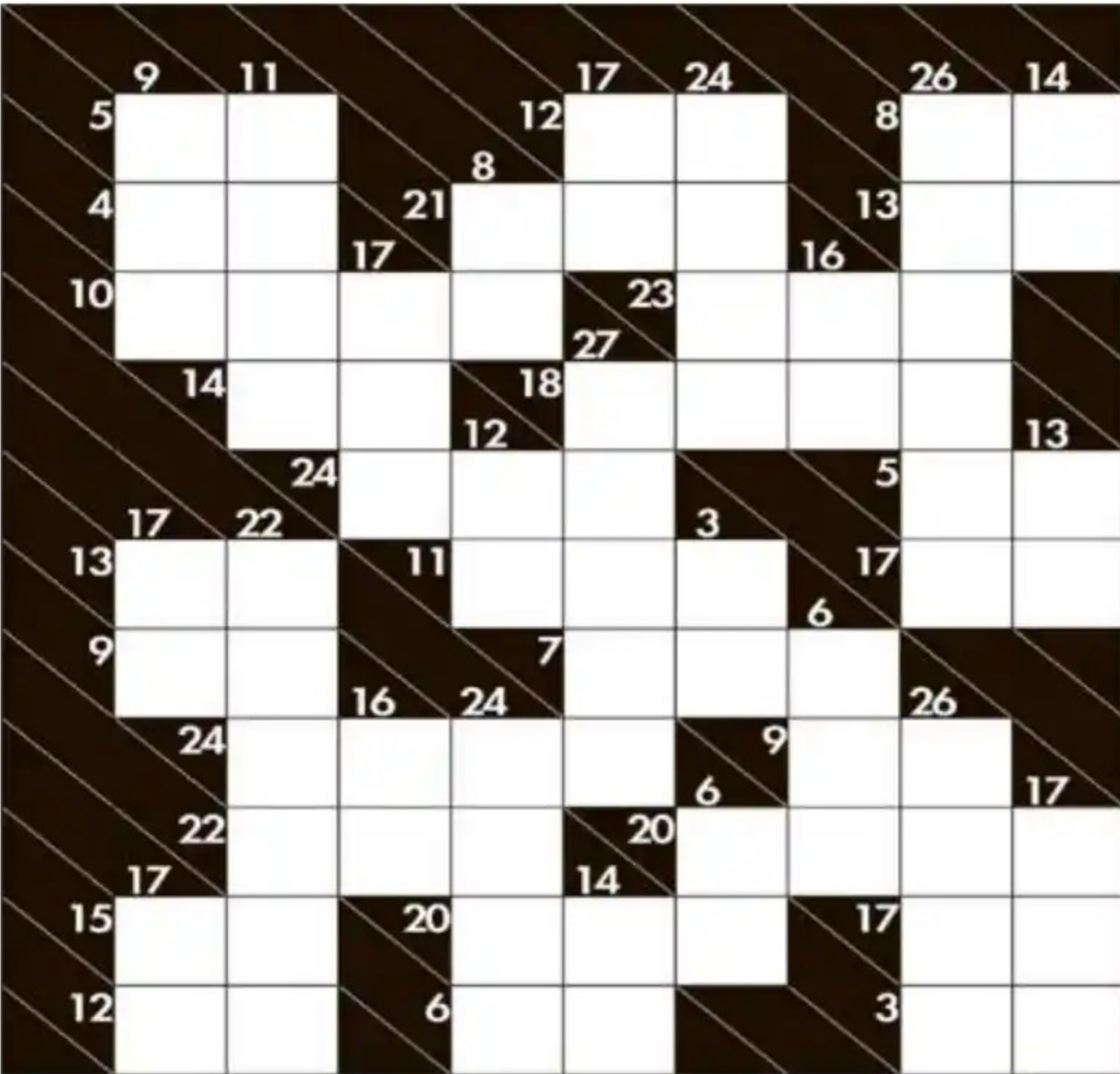
4	5	2	2	3	1	8	7
3	6	7	1	5	4	3	6
6	4	3	7	4	8	3	3
7	1	2	3	6	7	5	8
5	3	7	6	3	7	3	4
8	7	3	4	4	1	6	2
1	3	4	8	2	3	1	6
1	1	5	3	8	2	7	3

SOLUTION TO 3322

8	1	6	3	5
2	7	6	5	8
3	2	5	8	1
3	5	8	7	6
6	1	3	2	5
2	1	6	3	5
4	8	7	6	2
5	6	7	2	4

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

KAKURO- 3323



SOLUTION TO 3322

1	3	9	4	5	7
2	7	8	7	1	9
4	1	2	5	7	1
6	9	8	7	8	9
3	1	9	1	8	9
1	5	8	5	6	4
4	1	9	7	8	2
6	4	1	1	3	5
7	2	1	8	7	9
3	2	9	7	1	2
8	6	1	5	6	1

To solve the puzzle: Put a number from 1 through 9 in a cell. No zeros. A number in a cell separated by diagonal line tells the sum of numbers in consecutive cells at its right or downward. No number may appear more than once in consecutive cells.

SU DO KU X - 3873

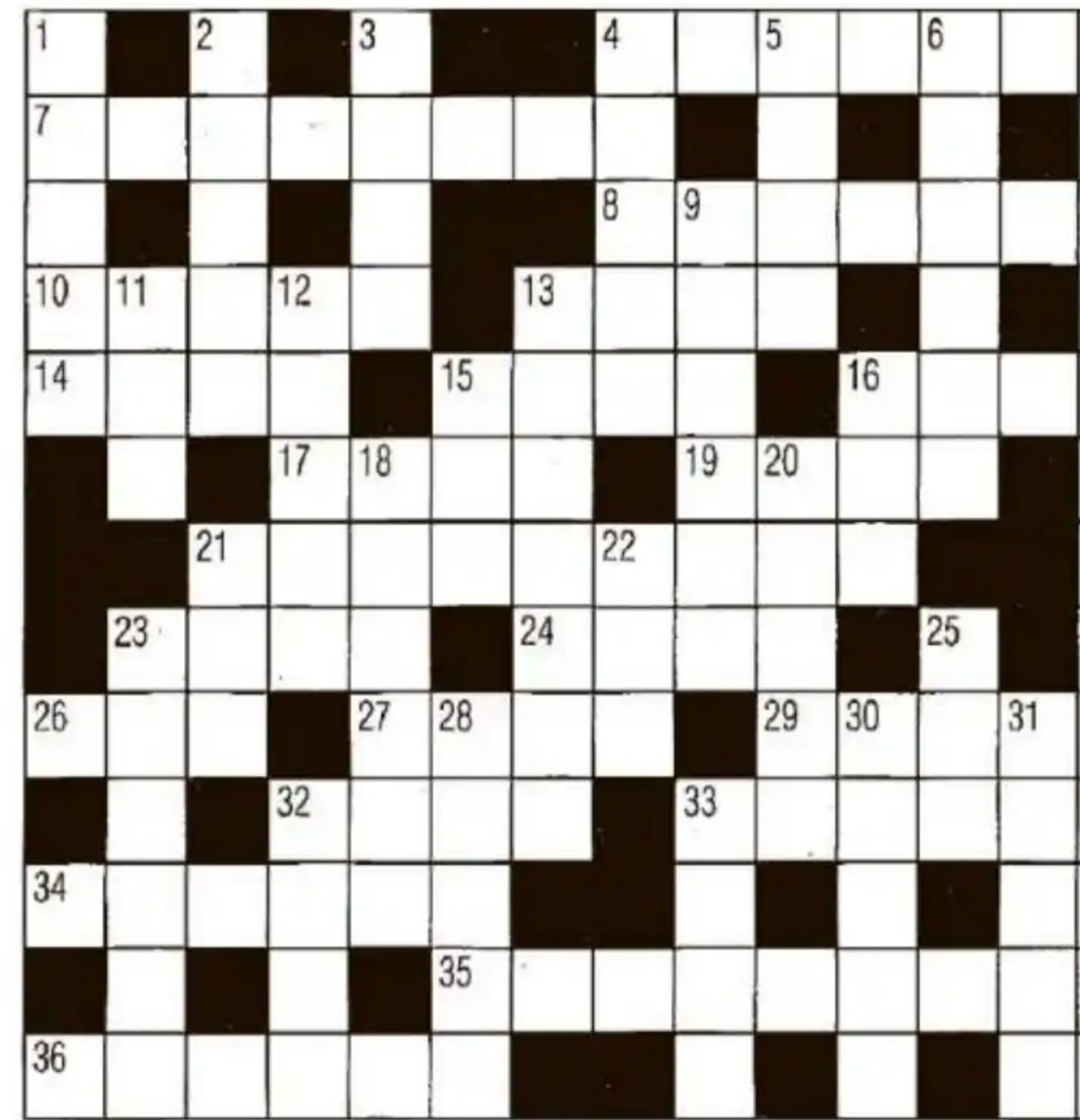
		8			1	
					3	6
		1				
6					4	
				2	6	
	5	4			7	8
4				3		7
9		2				
5	2				3	

SOLUTION TO 3872

8	4	6	5	7	9	2	1	3
7	1	2	4	3	6	9	8	5
9	3	5	8	2	1	4	7	6
1	2	4	3	6	5	7	9	8
6	5	8	7	9	2	1	3	4
3	7	9	1	8	4	5	6	2
4	8	7	2	1	3	6	5	9
5	6	3	9	4	7	8	2	1
2	9	1	6	5	8	3	4	7

To solve the puzzle: The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 12386



- ACROSS**
4 Expunge (6)
7 Enough, sufficient (8)
8 School uniform item (6)
10 Reserve supply (5)
13 Principal (4)
14 German man (4)
15 Solid, stable (4)
16 Toddler (3)
17 Employs (4)
19 Young salmon (4)
21 Rings, necklaces, etc. (9)
23 Strong wind (4)
24 Consumes (4)
26 Aggressive youth (3)
27 Pull along (4)
29 Norse god (4)
32 Heavy metal (4)
33 Trap (5)
34 Open revolt (6)
35 No longer in use (8)
36 Stretch tight (6)
- DOWN**
1 Stern, severe (5)
2 Male voice (5)
3 Baby's biscuit (4)
4 Exclude (5)
5 Lacking fat (4)
6 Minor earthquake (6)
9 Marine gastropod (6)
11 Golf peg (3)
12 Inhumane (5)
13 Give false information (7)
15 Charge (3)
16 Rugby score (3)
18 Country (6)
20 Illegal burning (5)
21 Short punch (3)
22 Insulate (3)
23 Become bankrupt (2,4)
25 Tree (3)
28 Synthetic fibre (5)
30 Unfashionable (5)
31 At no time (5)
32 Girl's name (4)
33 Wintry weather (4)

CRYPTIC

- ACROSS**
- 4 Tough guys maybe apt to do it in (6)
7 For a considerable period, it's fun (4,4)
8 It's painful for a gent struggling to tour the West Indies (6)
10 Rub away (5)
13 Produce much, and many more (4)
14 Disciplinary record? (4)
15 It's equatable to a miss (4)
16 She's good to me (3)
17 A unique blow? (4)
19 Singular soccer side's incentive (4)
21 Guarded by that expert sleuth Edward (9)
23 Not stereo; but on its day, loved (4)
24 A bit wet? Emphatically not !! (4)
26 Tricky thing to wear? (3)
27 Close to the boundary of one's comprehension? (4)
29 A bit of a cat (4)
32 According to this, 50 all out! (4)
33 A god in orbit (5)
34 Baker in Sherlock Holmes stories? (6)
35 That suitable for Ishowri trial? (8)
36 Damaged, but OK in a gun (6)
- DOWN**
- 1 Having looked lascivious, I leave Goldie upset (5)
2 Another name for Jason? (5)
3 To a viewer, something inflammatory (4)
4 Not finished during a meal, it may well be hard (5)
5 Stick to that light diet (4)
6 Vessel breaking a rule about a horse (6)
9 Takes by force and strews around (6)
11 A terrible tease? (3)
12 When poured, it's like cold water (5)
13 Sack people n they can go to blazes! (7)
15 Encountered some home truths (3)
16 A dud rhyme is far from clear (3)
18 Old one, possibly a fathead (6)
20 Not the only one in flower (5)
21 Shoot over the top (3)
22 Bobby is firm, yet soft (3)
23 Business will always be important (6)
25 So thick-headed, this boozier? (3)
28 Broken bread, say (5)
30 Acts of revolution? (5)
31 Fashion figure in computerised communication (5)
32 A little kiss from a bird? (4)
33 Noteworthy protectors (4)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 12385

- CRYPTIC**
- ACROSS:** 1, Tribes 7, Long-stop 8, Peru 10, Pro tem 11, Undoes 14, Log 16, Depth 17, The-N 19, Be-gun 21, Denim 22, Get on 23, W-arm 26, Semis 28, Fib 29, Tra-Gl-c 30, Pull-E.T. 31, Only 32, Grateful 33, Edward.
- DOWN:** 1, Teapot 2, Breton 3, S-L-um 4, A-Gen-dum 5, Strop 6, Apish 8, Pole(s apart) 9, Reg 12, Den 13, Ether 15, Tenor 18, H-over 19, Bet 20, Gin 21, Desiree 22, Gig 23, Willow 24, AB-ly 25, Met-hod 26, Stage 27, Madam 28, Fun 30, Pole.

EASY

- ACROSS:** 1, Seesaw 7, Eventual 8, Rant 10, That is 11, Supine 14, Gel 16, Rapid 17, Miss 19, Label 21, Focus 22, Pagan 23, Meet 26, Hates 28, Mob 29, Alight 30, Air bag 31, Rats 32, Ethiopia 33, Bursts.
- DOWN:** 1, System 2, Slates 3, Wets 4, Ensures 5, Tulip 6, Bleed 8, Rags 9, Nil 12, Pal 13, Niece 15, Macaw 18, Ideal 19, Log 20, Bun 21, Fashion 22, Peg 23, Mortar 24, Ebbs 25, Tights 26, Hazel 27, Tithe 28, Mia 30, Arab.

SCRABBLE™

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P₃Y₄R₁E₁D₂U₁R₁

E₁O₁B₃O₁R₁M₃D₂

D₂Y₄R₁T₁A₁E₁H₄

H₄R₁E₁E₁A₁T₁F₄

A₁Y₄N₁M₃I₁P₃T₁

Triple Word Score

Triple Word Score

Triple Word Score

Triple Word Score

Triple Word Score

RACK 1

RACK 2

RACK 3

RACK 4

RACK 5

PAR SCORE 295-305

by JUDD

FIVE RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 25 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary. JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION	
B ₃ A ₁ S ₁ I ₁ F ₄ Y ₄	RACK 1 = 42
C ₃ L ₁ E ₁ A ₁ R ₁ E ₁ R ₁	RACK 2 = 59
I ₁ N ₁ F ₄ A ₁ N ₁ T ₁	RACK 3 = 17
E ₁ N ₁ S ₁ L ₁ A ₁ V ₁ E ₁	RACK 4 = 70
PAR SCORE 120-130	JUDD'S TOTAL 188

US completes
H-1B visa cap
selection process
for FY 2027

WASHINGTON, PTI: The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) said it has met the annual quota of 85,000 H-1B cap beneficiaries for FY 2027 and completed the regular and advanced-degree selection lotteries.

The agency said it had notified all prospective petitioners with selected beneficiaries that they are eligible to file an H-1B cap-subject petition for those beneficiaries. The H-1B visa programme is used largely by US technology companies to hire foreign workers. Indian professionals, including tech workers and physicians, form one of the largest groups of H-1B visa holders.

“H-1B cap-subject petitions for FY 2027, including those petitions eligible for the advanced-degree exemption, may be filed with USCIS beginning April 1, 2026, if filed for a selected beneficiary and based on a valid registration,” a USCIS statement said here on Tuesday.

It said the period for filing the H-1B cap-subject petition will be at least 90 days and asked petitioners to include a copy of the applicable selection notice with the FY 2027 H-1B cap-subject petition. USCIS said it would accept the new edition of the I-129 form that was published on February 27 this year.

The H-1B selection process is shifting to a wage-based model, in which applicants with higher salaries and skills are given priority.

UK to host
multi-nation talks
on Strait of Hormuz
amid Iran war

LONDON, PTI/AFP

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Wednesday said the UK will not be “dragged into” the war against Iran as he announced that Britain will host a multi-nation meeting this week to discuss diplomatic and political measures to reopen the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

Speaking at a Downing Street press conference, Starmer said the meeting would bring together representatives from about 35 countries to assess ways to restore freedom of navigation in the vital waterway.

UK Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper will host the discussions, which will “assess all viable diplomatic and political measures that we can take to restore freedom of navigation, guarantee the safety of trapped ships and seafarers and resume the movement of vital commodities”, Starmer said.

“Following that meeting, we will also convene our military planners to look at how we can marshal our capabilities and make the strait accessible and safe after the fighting has stopped,” he added.

The discussions will include



First responders and residents carry children out of an apartment building that was hit by an Iranian missile in Bnei Brak, Israel, on Wednesday. AFP

countries that recently signed a statement saying they were ready “to contribute to appropriate efforts to ensure safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz”. Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the Netherlands are among those that have signed it. Iran has virtually closed the vital strait since US-Israeli strikes that began the war on February 28, sending global oil and gas prices soaring.

“I do have to level with people on this. This will not be easy,” Starmer said.

The British leader also addressed remarks by US President Donald Trump, who has criticised Nato and questioned the alliance’s role after some allies declined to join the war with Iran.

King Charles to address US
Congress amid tensions

King Charles III will deliver an address to Congress during his visit to Washington in late April, becoming the first British monarch to give a speech to a joint meeting of US lawmakers in more than three decades, AP/PTI reports from Washington.

The joint address was announced on Wednesday by congressional leaders, who said it was part of events marking the 250th anniversary of the US declaring independence from Britain. The speech

also comes at a time of friction between the two nations. President Donald Trump’s “America First” foreign policy has called into question the US commitment to European allies, and Britain has declined to support US war in Iran. Still, congressional leaders emphasised the close ties with Britain. “The American experiment endures in no small part because of the British tradition from which it sprang,” said House Speaker Mike Johnson.

Iran strikes
Kuwait airport,
tanker off Qatar in
fresh attacks

DUBAI, AP/PTI: Iran hit an oil tanker off the coast of Qatar and Kuwait’s airport on Wednesday while airstrikes battered Tehran in an unrelenting tempo hours after US President Donald Trump said he was nearly ready to wind down the war.

Trump, who is scheduled to address the nation later in the day, said he could walk away from the war in two to three weeks once he felt confident Iran would not be able to build a nuclear weapon, even if Tehran does not agree to a ceasefire. That raised the possibility that the US could withdraw without any guarantee from Iran that it would stop bombing its Gulf Arab neighbours or release its grip on the crucial Strait of Hormuz.

A fifth of the world’s traded oil passes through the strait in peacetime, and Tehran’s stranglehold, along with its strikes on energy infrastructure in the region, has caused oil prices to skyrocket. Even if the strait were to reopen quickly, some effects such as higher food prices could persist for months or longer. It is also not clear what Israel, which began bombing Iran alongside the US on February 28, would do if the US pulls out without a deal.

WORLD AT A GLANCE



Astronauts Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover, Jeremy Hansen and Christina Koch pose for a photo as they head to launch pad 39B at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida, on Wednesday. REUTERS

Nasa fuels rocket for first crewed
lunar trip in half a century

► Nasa began fuelling its moon rocket Wednesday for humanity’s first lunar trip in more than half a century, aiming for a 6:24 pm EDT a liftoff on Wednesday (3:54 am IST Thursday) with four astronauts, AP/PTI reports from Cape Canaveral.

Tensions were high as hydrogen fuel started flowing into the rocket hours ahead of the planned launch. Dangerous hydrogen leaks erupted during a countdown test earlier this year, forcing a lengthy flight delay. The launch team needs to load more than 2.6 million litres of fuel into the 32-storey Space Launch System rocket on the pad

before the Artemis II crew can board. “It is time to fly,” commander Reid Wiseman said on the eve of launch via X. Favourable weather was forecast. Three Americans and one Canadian will fly around the moon without stopping or even orbiting, then head straight back for a Pacific splashdown. They will set a new distance record for the farthest humans have travelled from Earth as they zoom some 6,400 km beyond the moon and then make a U-turn. Astronauts last flew to the moon during Apollo 17 in 1972. Artemis II is the opening shot of Nasa’s grand plans for a permanent moon base.

France may restrict social media

► President Emmanuel Macron is hoping France will become one of the first European Union countries to ban social media for under-15s, following similar moves in Australia and Indonesia, AFP reports from Paris.

Both houses of parliament seem to have different visions for the ban, meaning they will likely need to reach a compromise before it can become law. But even if the legislation is adopted, questions remain over whether it could be enforced. The lower house National Assembly in January passed legislation demanding all social media platforms refuse new users under 15 and suspend accounts belonging to children under that age.



Actress Chase Infiniti attends a premiere for Season 1 of the television series “The Testaments” in Los Angeles on Tuesday. REUTERS

Robotaxi glitch strands riders

► Some robotaxi passengers were left stranded in the middle of fast-moving traffic in a major Chinese city on Wednesday after their driverless vehicles stopped running, AP/PTI reports from Beijing.

A preliminary investigation indicates more than 100 robotaxis came to a halt because of a “system malfunction”, police in the city of Wuhan said in a statement, without elaborating. No injuries were reported. An instruction on a screen read: “Driving system malfunction. Staff are expected to arrive in 5 minutes.” After no one showed up, the passenger pushed an SOS button and was told that staff were on their way. It is the first time a mass shutdown of robotaxis has been reported in China.

19 migrants found dead off Italy

► Nineteen people were found dead and 58 rescued alive by the Italian coast guard after it intercepted a dinghy carrying migrants that was in distress, AP/PTI reports from Rome.

The dinghy was intercepted about 80 nautical miles from the southern Italian island of Lampedusa on Tuesday night. The Italian coast guard operated in the Libyan search-and-rescue area amid rough weather conditions, a spokesman said on Wednesday. “We were the only ones able to intervene, as there were no other ships or rescue teams in the area. Sea conditions were pretty extreme, with waves of more than 6–7 metres,” said coast guard spokesman Roberto D’Arrigo. D’Arrigo said the migrants had probably departed from Libya and that the victims likely died of hypothermia, but the cause of the deaths still needs to be verified.



FRENCH PRESIDENT EMMANUEL MACRON AND JAPAN'S PRIME MINISTER SANAE TAKAICHI POSE DURING A SIGNING CEREMONY IN TOKYO ON WEDNESDAY

Russia takes ‘full control’
of Ukraine’s Luhansk

It is one of two
regions in the
industrialised
Donbas

MOSCOW, REUTERS



Firefighters work at the site of a Russian drone strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Lutsk on Wednesday. REUTERS

Russia’s Defence Ministry said on Wednesday that its forces had taken full control of the Luhansk region in eastern Ukraine, suggesting they had seized the last small area that had remained beyond their reach since 2022.

More than 99% of Luhansk, one of four Ukrainian regions Russia claimed as its own in 2022 — something Kyiv and most Western countries have rejected as an illegal land grab — has long been under Russian control.

“Units of the ‘West’ military grouping have completed the liberation of the Luhansk People’s Republic,” the Defence Ministry said in a statement,

using Moscow’s preferred name for the region.

Reuters could not independently verify the battlefield report and there was no immediate reaction from Ukraine.

Luhansk is one of two regions, along with Donetsk, that make up the wider industrialised Donbas area. The Kremlin on Wednesday reiterated its demand that Ukrainian forces withdraw from the part of Donetsk that

Moscow does not control to end what it called the “hot phase” of the war, a demand Kyiv has repeatedly dismissed as absurd.

Russia’s Defence Ministry also said its forces had taken control of the village of Verkhnya Pysarivka in Ukraine’s Kharkiv region and Boikove in the Zaporizhzhia region in south-eastern Ukraine. Reuters could not independently verify those battlefield claims.

SC casts doubt on
Trump’s bid to limit
birthright citizenship

WASHINGTON, AP/PTI

The Supreme Court cast doubt on US President Donald Trump’s restrictions on birthright citizenship in a consequential case that was heightened by the president’s rare presence in the courtroom.

Conservative and liberal justices on Wednesday questioned whether Trump’s order declaring that children born to parents who are in the US illegally or temporarily are not American citizens complies with either the Constitution or federal law.

Trump, the first sitting president to attend arguments at the nation’s highest court, spent just over an hour inside the courtroom for arguments made by the Republican administration’s top Supreme Court lawyer, Solicitor General D John Sauer.

The president departed shortly after lawyer Cecilia Wang began her presentation in defence of broad birthright citizenship. Trump heard Sauer face one sceptical question after another, with justices ask-

ing about the legal basis for the order and voicing practical concerns. “Is this happening in the delivery room?” Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson asked, pressing on how the government would determine who is entitled to citizenship and who is not.

Justice Clarence Thomas sounded the most likely among the nine justices to side with Trump. “How much of the debates around the 14th Amendment had anything to do with immigration?” Thomas asked.

The justices are hearing Trump’s appeal of a lower-court ruling from New Hampshire that struck down the citizenship restrictions. They have not taken effect anywhere in the country. The case represents another test of Trump’s assertions of executive power that challenge long-standing precedent for a court that has largely ruled in the president’s favour — though with some notable exceptions that Trump has answered with sharply personal criticism of the justices. A definitive ruling is expected by early summer.

Israel supplies
first batch of
light machine
guns to India

JERUSALEM, PTI: A leading Israeli small-arms manufacturer has delivered the first batch of light machine guns (LMGs) to India under the ‘Make in India’ initiative with technology transfer.

The first batch of 2,000 NEGEV 7.62x51 LMGs, part of a larger contract for 41,000 units, was delivered over the weekend, with an additional 4,000 scheduled for delivery later this year, Israel Weapons Industries (IWI) said. The delivery was carried out by PLR Systems, a joint venture between IWI and Adani Group, the first private company in India to manufacture small arms and ammunition.

“The milestone follows the successful completion of the technology transfer process under India’s ‘Make in India’ initiative and reflects IWI’s commitment to delivering advanced systems in accordance with contractual schedules and the highest quality standards, while supporting India’s defence manufacturing ecosystem,” the company said.

Pak, Afghanistan
and China hold
ceasefire talks

ISLAMABAD, PTI: Officials from Pakistan, Afghanistan and China are meeting on Wednesday in the Chinese city of Urumqi under the trilateral mechanism, according to a media report.

It is the first high-level interaction between the two warring neighbours since Pakistan launched Operation Ghazab lil-Haq against alleged terror hideouts in Afghanistan on February 26.

Quoting a senior Foreign Ministry official, Dawn reported that the meeting is not a “mediation effort per se”. It said the meeting is focused on sharing perspectives on the latest escalation. No major outcomes are expected, though China is pushing for confidence-building measures such as reopening trade routes. Another official said Beijing requested Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, who was in Beijing on Tuesday, for Pakistan’s participation as Kabul had asked for assistance from Chinese officials in bringing Islamabad to the table.

CHEAP DIGITAL CONTENT
Advocacy groups urge YouTube
to shield children from ‘AI slop’

WASHINGTON, AP/PTI

Advocacy groups and experts have condemned YouTube for serving low-quality artificial intelligence-generated videos to its most vulnerable audience: children.

In a letter to YouTube CEO Neal Mohan and Sundar Pichai, the CEO of YouTube’s parent company Google, children’s advocacy group Fairplay expressed “serious concern” about the spread of AI-generated videos on both YouTube and YouTube Kids.

The letter, sent on Wednesday morning, was signed by more than 200 organisations and individual experts such as child psychiatrists and educators.

“This ‘AI slop’ harms children’s development by distorting their sense of reality, overwhelming their learning processes and hijacking their attention, thereby extending time online and displacing offline activities necessary for their healthy development,” the letter reads.

“These harms are particularly acute for young children.” The letter calls on YouTube to clearly label all AI-generated content and ban any AI-generated content on YouTube Kids. It also proposes barring AI-generated videos from being recommended to users under 18 and implementing an option for parents to turn off AI-generated content even if their child searches for it.

The letter is signed by 135 organisations, including the American Federation of Teachers and the American Counseling Association, and around 100 individual experts such as The Anxious Generation author Jonathan Haidt. The letter is part of a larger campaign by Fairplay that also includes a petition.

Much of this AI-generated content is fast-paced, with bright colours, lively music and clickbait titles designed to grab the attention of young viewers, the letter outlines. There has been a growing movement online against AI-generated content, particularly when it appears low quality or leans into the meaninglessness of “brainrot”.

Spokesperson Boot Bullwinkle said in a statement that YouTube has “high standards for the content in YouTube Kids, including limiting AI-generated content in the app to a small set of high-quality channels”. “We also provide parents the option to block channels. Across YouTube, we prioritise transparency when it comes to AI content, labelling content from our own AI tools and requiring creators to disclose realistic AI content,” Bullwinkle said.

“We’re always evolving our approach to stay current as the ecosystem evolves.”

YouTube’s current policy regarding AI-generated content requires creators to disclose when content that is “realistic” is made with altered or synthetic media, including generative AI.

China, Bhutan discuss boundary
alignment in undisputed areas

BEIJING, PTI: China and Bhutan on Wednesday discussed boundary alignment in areas “where there are no disputes” as the two sides held the 15th Expert Group Meeting on their boundary issues.

At the expert group meeting held here, the two sides affirmed the progress made in the China-Bhutan boundary negotiations in recent years, a joint press release issued after the talks said.

They had frank and constructive discussions in a friendly atmosphere on the way forward to make further progress on the implementation of the Three-Step Roadmap, it said. The two sides agreed to maintain the momentum of boundary negotiations and hold the next round of the Expert Group Meeting in Bhutan on mutually convenient dates, it said.

Significantly, the 3rd meeting of the Joint Technical Team on Delimitation and Demarcation of the China-Bhutan boundary, held on the sidelines of the expert group meeting, discussed boundary alignment in undisputed areas. “On the sidelines of the

15th EGM, the 3rd meeting of the Joint Technical Team on Delimitation and Demarcation of the China-Bhutan boundary discussed boundary alignment in areas where there are no disputes, in keeping with the Cooperation Agreement,” the release said.

The 15th Expert Group Meeting on Bhutan-China Boundary Issues was co-chaired by Letho Tobdhen Tangbi, Secretary of the International Boundaries of Bhutan, and Hou Yanqi, Director General of the Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China. Hou was a former ambassador to Nepal and ASEAN.

China and Bhutan do not have diplomatic relations but maintain contact through periodic visits by officials.

While Beijing has resolved boundary disputes with 12 neighbours, India and Bhutan are the only two countries with which China has yet to resolve disputes. The two countries agreed in 2023 to expedite negotiations to settle their border dispute through a three-step roadmap.

GST collection rises to 11-month high of Rs 2 lakh crore in March

Full FY26 mop-up jumps to Rs 22.27 lakh crore

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Revenue collection from THE Goods and Services Tax (GST) jumped by 8.8% to a 10-month high of Rs 2 lakh crore in March, aided by robust growth in mop-up from imports, as per data released by the Union Finance Ministry on Wednesday.

For the full financial year ended March 31, 2026, the gross revenue collection rose to Rs 22.27 lakh crore, up 8.3%

from Rs 20.55 lakh crore in the previous year. Net revenues, after adjusting for refunds, in 2025-26 stood at Rs 19.34 lakh crore, which is 7.1% higher when compared with the previous year.

Analysts said the impact of the West Asia crisis on the GST revenue collection would be reflected in the April numbers. “Since these figures relate to the production/consumption during February, it would not reflect the impact of the ongoing crisis in West Asia,” said



MS Mani, Partner, Deloitte India, referring to the impact of the Gulf conflict on March numbers.

During the month of March, GST refunds increased by 13.8% year-on-year to Rs 22,074 crore. Net GST revenue collection in March stood at Rs 1.78 lakh crore, up 8.2% over the same month of the previous year. The March revenue collection is the high-

est monthly mop-up since Rs 2.09 lakh crore net recorded in April 2025.

There was strong growth in GST revenue from imports, which jumped 17.8% to Rs 53,861 crore, while gross domestic revenue increased by 5.9% to Rs 1.46 lakh crore during the month under review.

“There has been a significant increase in imports that has contributed to the GST collections, which would also have led to a significant increase in the Customs duty collections,” said Mani.

While states like Maharashtra, Karnataka and Telangana continue to show robust growth in collections, states such as Haryana, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh demonstrate slower growth.

Vivek Jalan, Partner at Tax Connect Advisory Services, said the GST collection figures indicate India's strong economic growth momentum.

“GST collections not only reinforce fiscal stability, but also validate the broader macroeconomic narrative: India's tax system is keeping pace with GDP expansion, providing governments and businesses alike with confidence in the sustainability of growth,” said Jalan.

“GST collections in FY2025-26 provide a strong fiscal mirror to the country's GDP growth momentum. This tax buoyancy aligns with India's estimated GDP growth of around 7% for FY2025-26, underscoring the link between rising consumption, expanding imports, and robust compliance,” he added.

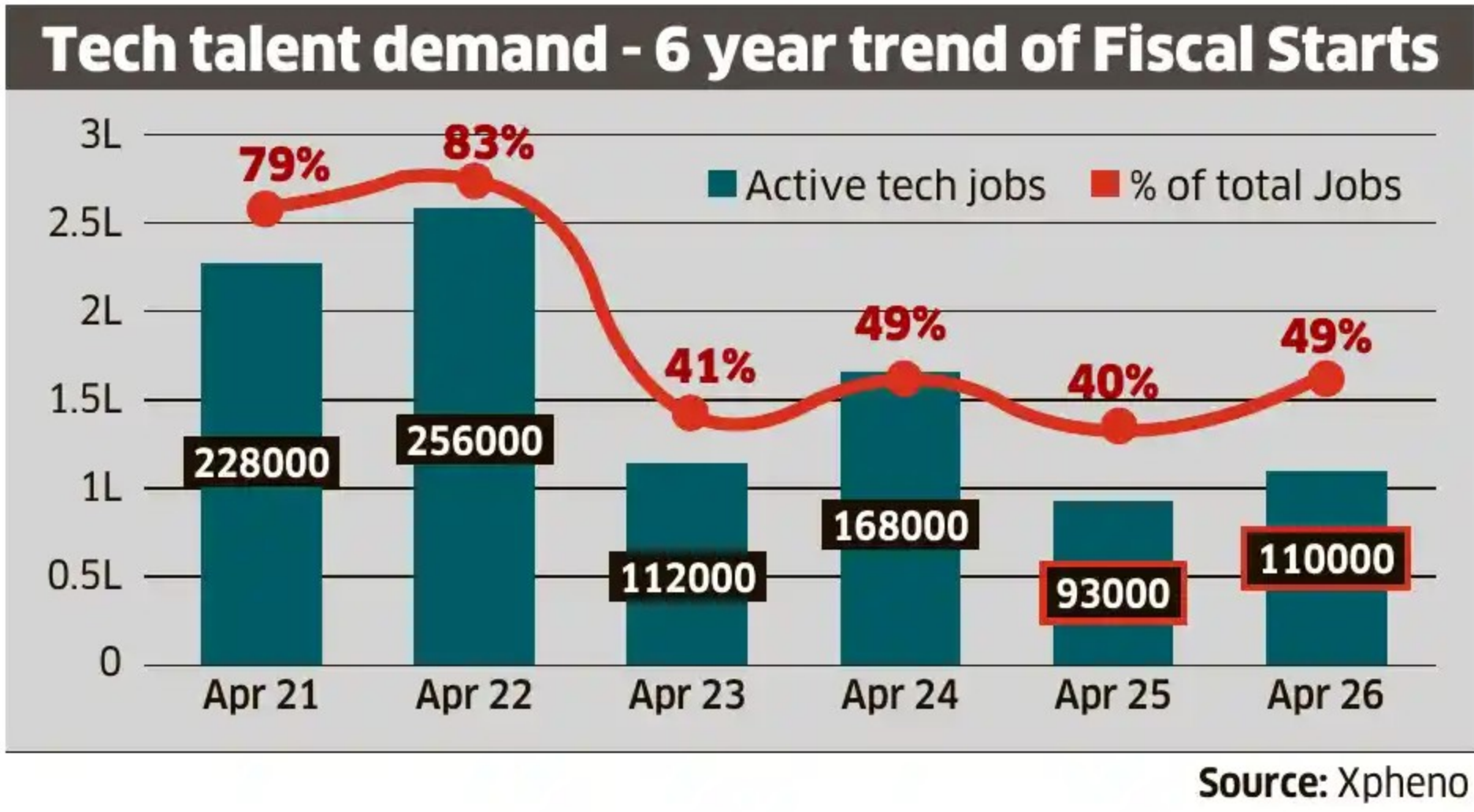
Tech job openings decline 8% in April; GCC hiring drops 21%

UMA KANNAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

The financial year 2026-27 kicks off with not-so-good news for techies, as this fiscal is set to have the second-lowest start on active tech demand over the last six years. Fresh job demand has been hit due to global events, and in April, total active tech job openings will be 1,10,000, an 8% decline compared to March 2026.

According to Bengaluru-based specialist staffing company Xpheno's new report, Bengaluru is set to see 26,000 job openings in April, which is 7% down compared to the previous month and a 13% decline compared to April 2025. Top locations Hyderabad, Delhi-NCR, Mumbai and Pune too will witness 9%, 10%, 25% and 29% MoM decline, respectively.

“The tech sector continues a downward trajectory in active talent demand volume. The volume of active openings in the sector has remained sluggish over the last four quarters.



The sector's current contribution to the country's total active talent demand is 49%, rolling back to the sub-50% mark for the first time since December 2025,” Kamal Karanath, Co-founder of Xpheno said.

While entry-level openings will be around 15,000 in April, an 11% decline YoY, mid-junior openings will be 6,000, a 10% decline. The report also mentioned that GCC tech openings in April will see a 21% decline to 15,000 in April, compared to the previous month.

“Mid-senior openings account for 54% of all active openings and have registered

a 6% drop in volume compared to the previous month. Opportunities for entry-level tech talent up to two years of experience remained flat at 15,000 active volumes as seen in March 2026,” Karanath added.

Geographically, 62% of active tech demand is concentrated in and around the megacities collective. Despite the overall majority contribution, the volume of demand from megacities has dropped 11% MoM and 29% YoY. The demand from Tier-2 and 3 locations has dropped 5% MoM and grown 10% YoY, the report added.

Oracle layoffs: Structural shift in tech sector as firms pivot to AI-led models

UMA KANNAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

BENGALURU, DHNS: With tech giant Oracle laying off 12,000 employees in India alone, the debate surrounding AI replacing jobs has intensified again. Recently, software company Atlassian too announced that it would cut 10% of its workforce — around 1,600 — and self-fund further investment in AI.

Recently, Oracle announced that it would be restructuring its business to support investments in AI and cloud infrastructure. Many senior employees in Oracle have been laid off, and according to sources, employees from consulting & services, and healthcare verticals were most impacted. Sources also said that fired employees have received only the layoff email so far, and no further communication.

HR experts said layoffs reflect a structural shift in the tech sector as organisations pivot towards AI-led operating models and optimise traditional roles. Many employees took to social media to share their ordeals. Employees with 10-15 years of experience are also laid off, as the company is now focusing on AI.

Aditya Narayan Mishra, MD and CEO of CIEL HR, said every day, we are seeing new roles emerging, while many are also becoming irrelevant. While this may create short-term disruption, it is also accelerating demand for new-age skills in AI, data, and digital

engineering. He said for impacted employees, the immediate focus should be on reskilling and staying adaptable.

Layoffs such as those at Oracle reflect a broader transition underway in the tech industry, where companies are reorganising around AI and automation. This is less about sudden job loss and more about a gradual shift in the kinds of roles that are needed, Jaspreet Bindra, Co-founder and CEO of AI&Beyond, said.

According to Layoffs.fyi, which tracks tech layoffs, in 2026 alone, 71 tech companies have laid off 40,482 tech employees.

Strong opportunities
Kapil Joshi, CEO of IT Staffing, Quess Corp, opined that the ongoing shift is less about loss of jobs and more about realignment. Companies are investing in talent that can build, deploy, and scale digital systems, and professionals who align themselves with these shifts will continue to find strong opportunities in the market.

“Another shift we are seeing is the process in which companies evaluate and onboard talent. Hiring cycles, especially for niche skills in AI, cybersecurity, and advanced engineering, are becoming longer as organisations are far more rigorous in assessing capability and fit. While standard roles are still being closed in 45-50 days, roles in AI/ML, cybersecurity, and complex engineering are taking 75-90+ days, compared to 45-60 days earlier,” Joshi said.

OpenAI closes \$122 bn funding at \$852 bn valuation

AI research firm generates \$2 bn in revenue a month

BENGALURU, DHNS

OpenAI, the parent company of ChatGPT, has raised \$122 billion in a record funding round, and its valuation has reached \$852 billion. The round saw participation from its strategic partners, including Amazon, NVIDIA, and SoftBank, as well as continued involvement from its long-term partner, Microsoft. SoftBank co-led the round alongside a16z, D. E. Shaw Ventures, MGX and TPG.

“Within a year of launching ChatGPT, we reached \$1 billion in revenue. By the end of 2024, we were generating \$1 billion per quarter. We are now generating \$2 billion in revenue per month. At this stage, we are growing revenue four times faster than the companies that defined the in-



ternet and mobile eras, including Alphabet and Meta,” the company said in a blog post.

OpenAI will be included in several exchange-traded funds managed by ARK Invest, further broadening ownership and giving more people the opportunity to share in the upside economics of OpenAI and the AI era.

“We have also expanded our existing revolving credit facility to approximately \$4.7 billion, which gives us added flexibility as we continue to invest at scale,” the company said.

OpenAI announced that ChatGPT is the overwhelming leader in consumer AI with more than 900 million weekly active users and over 50 million subscribers. ChatGPT has 6x the monthly web visits and mobile sessions than the next largest AI app, while total AI time spent is 4x the next large-

est AI app and 4x all others combined. “Search usage has nearly tripled in a year, and our ads pilot reached more than \$100 million in ARR in under six weeks. These are not just growth milestones — they show that frontier AI is becoming part of everyday life for people around the world,” the AI research firm said.

Over the past 15 months, OpenAI has expanded its infrastructure strategy beyond a small number of core providers to meet the scale and reliability requirements of global AI deployment. Demand for AI systems is growing faster and becoming more diverse. No single architecture can efficiently meet the needs of the entire AI frontier. To meet that demand and stay flexible, we are building a broader infrastructure portfolio across multiple cloud partners, multiple chip platforms, and deeper co-design across the stack, the company announced.

Recently, at the India AI Impact Summit 2026 here, the company launched OpenAI for India, an initiative with leading Indian partners to expand access to AI.

Wipro names new CEO for AI-Native unit

BENGALURU, DHNS: IT services major Wipro on Wednesday named Nagendra Bandaru as Chief Executive Officer for the AI-Native Business & Platforms Unit.

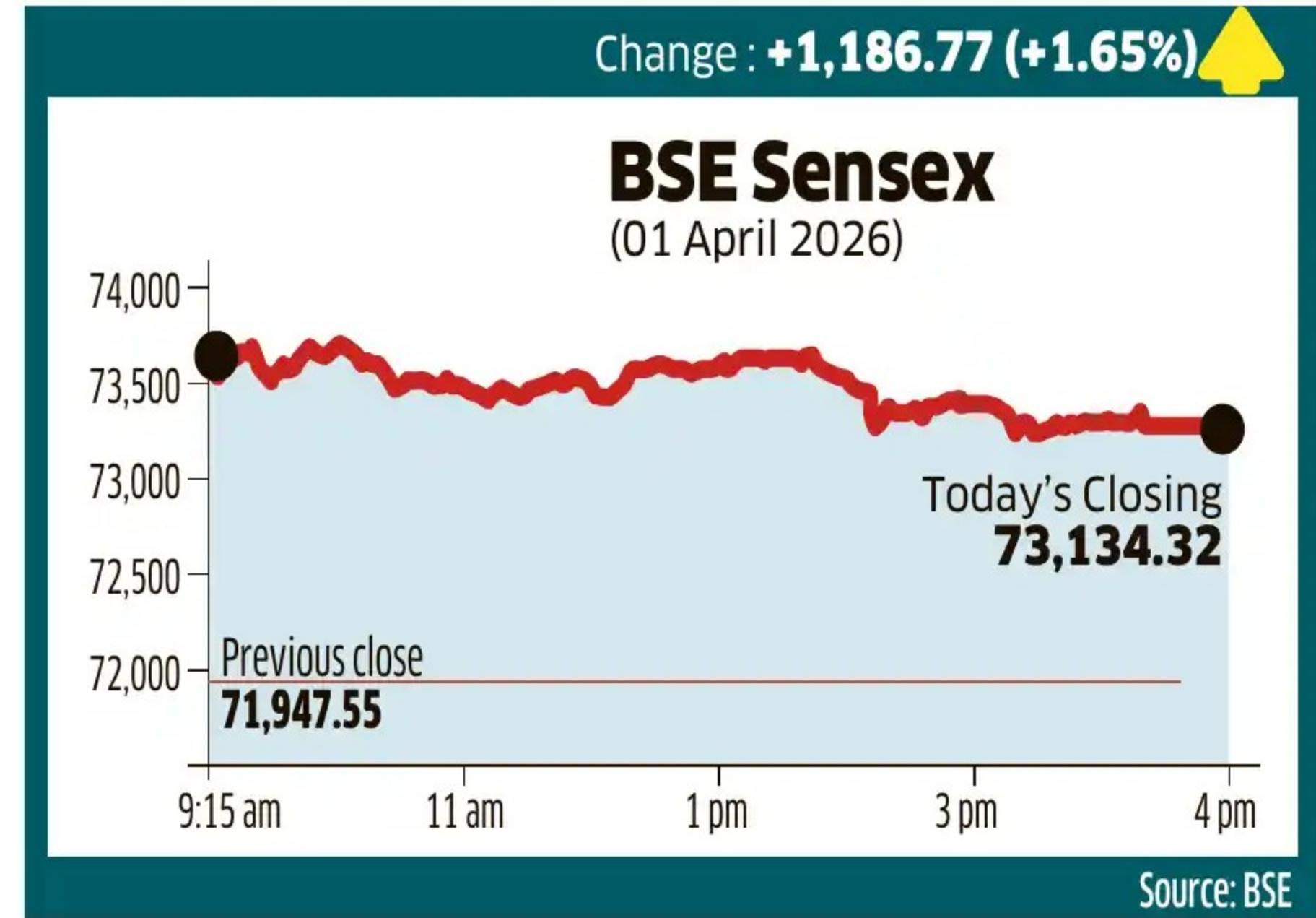
Bandaru, who is currently the President and Managing Partner of Technology Services



Global Business Lines (GBLs), is being transitioned to this new role, and he will continue to be a Senior Managerial Personnel of the company, Wipro said in a BSE filing. The company also announced that the CEO for Americas-2 Strategic Market Unit, Suzanne Dann, will be stepping down to pursue opportunities outside Wipro.

For Wipro, Americas-2 is a very significant market. The IT services firm also announced that Kanwar Singh will now be taking over as President and Managing Partner of Technology Services GBLs and will be an SMP of the company.

Kanwar has over 30 years of experience driving large-scale IT delivery, optimising enterprise technology portfolios, and leading data-driven digital transformations.



Stock market rebound adds Rs 9.60 L cr to investors' wealth

NEW DELHI, PTI: Market investors added Rs 9.60 lakh crore to their wealth on Wednesday, as hopes of the war ending in West Asia propelled a rally in stocks, driving the BSE Sensex 1,187 points higher.

A sharp rally in global markets and drop in crude prices also lifted market sentiment after two days of decline.

Beginning the new fiscal year on a buoyant note, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,186.77 points, or 1.65%, to settle at 73,134.32. During the day, it surged 2,017.03 points, or 2.80%, to 73,964.58.

Thanks to the rally in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies jumped Rs 9.60, 261.03 crore to Rs 4.22, 01, 433.48 crore (\$4.46 trillion). “Indian equity indices started the month of April on a strong note, supported by optimism around a potential de-escalation in US-Iran tensions,” according

to Bajaj Broking.

InterGlobe Aviation up
From the 30-Sensex firms, Trent, InterGlobe Aviation, Adani Ports, Bharat Electronics, State Bank of India, and Eternal emerged as the major gainers.

NTPC, Sun Pharma, Power Grid, UltraTech Cement and Bharti Airtel were the laggards.

“Markets staged a rebound on Tuesday, marking a strong start to the new financial year. The recovery was primarily driven by optimism around potential geopolitical de-escalation, which improved global risk appetite. A decline in crude oil prices and bond yields further supported sentiment, particularly for emerging markets like India,” Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, declined 2.13% to \$101.8 per barrel.

'West Asia crisis poses risks to India Inc credit rating profile'

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Credit rating profile of India Inc remained strong for the fifth straight year in 2025-26, but the West Asia crisis would pose risks in FY27, India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) said on Wednesday.

“The Middle East crisis adds a new category of external shock for Indian corporates — one that targets India's energy supply with limited supply diversification options, rather than just its prices,” said Arvind Rao, Senior Director, Head of Credit Policy Group, Ind-Ra.

For the fiscal ended March 31, Ind-Ra opines that the corporate credit profile remained strong, supported by domestic policy measures and favourable macroeconomic conditions.

Tariff-related disruptions — this year's prominent manifestation of an increasingly recurring set of risk factors — were largely manageable and affected only a few entities in export-heavy sectors. During FY26, Ind-Ra upgraded the

rating of 361 issuers (19% of the reviewed portfolio) and downgraded the rating of 115 issuers (6%).

“To be sure, FY26 credit profiles do not reflect even incipient stress from the evolving conflict, as the escalation materialised only in the closing month of the financial year. However, as the conflict continues to escalate, the five years of balance-sheet strengthening — that corporate India has undertaken since FY21 — will be tested in FY27,” said Rao.

While the timing and magnitude of these pressures remain uncertain, this buffer appears to be adequate for higher-rated entities (A category and above), while BBB and lower rated corporates — not just limited to energy-intensive sectors may find FY27 a challenging year, he added.

Nearly three-fourths of Ind-Ra's rated issuers were affirmed in FY26. The highest concentration of affirmations was seen in financial services, information technology, oil & gas, and media sectors.

Mahindra No. 2 PV maker in domestic space

NEW DELHI, PTI: Home-grown automaker Mahindra & Mahindra has become the second-largest passenger vehicle maker by volume in the Indian market in 2025-26, riding on its SUVs.

Mahindra overtook long-time No. 2 player Hyundai Motor India and home-grown rival Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles in FY26.

Maruti Suzuki is the market leader in India. It continued to lead the domestic market with its PV sales of 18,23,129 units in FY26, against 17,60,767 units in FY25, registering a growth of 3.54%.

Following in second place was Mahindra with 6,60,276 units in FY26 as against 5,51,487 units in FY25, a growth of 20%.

Tata was in the third spot, with FY26 domestic sales of 6,31,387 units, compared to 5,53,585 units in FY25, up 14%. Hyundai clocked domestic sales of 5,84,906 units.

BEL turnover up 16.2% in FY26

BENGALURU, DHNS: Defence PSU Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) has achieved 16.2% growth in turnover at Rs 26,750 crore (provisional) during the fiscal ended March 2026. In the previous year, its turnover stood at Rs 23,024 crore. In FY26, its export sales went up 33.65% to \$141.9 million, against \$106.17 million in the previous year, the company stated.

During fiscal 2025-26, BEL secured orders worth Rs 30,000 crore, including export orders worth \$346 million. Some of the major orders received during the year in defence include avionics for LCA, mountain radars, EW suite for Helicopters, air defence radars,

EOIR payloads for airborne and naval platforms, EW systems for naval platforms, fire control & sighting system for tanks, mobile communication terminal, network systems, counter unmanned aerial system, upgrades, spares and services.

The major orders in non-defence sector include communication equipment, IT infra for AIIMS, airport surveillance radars, software solutions, automatic train supervision system, EVM, etc.

On the export front, the major orders received include communication equipment, satellite communication network, TR modules, electronic fuzes, drones, etc. With this,

the total order book of BEL, as on April 1, 2026, stands at around Rs 74,000 crore, including an export order book of \$495 million.

Manoj Jain, CMD, BEL, said, “The geopolitical incidents during the year and ongoing conflict in West Asia have highlighted the need for self-reliance in strategic sectors and the importance of a resilient domestic industrial defence ecosystem. BEL remains well-positioned to effectively navigate these challenges through its expertise across multiple technologies and platforms, strong order book, diversified portfolio, modernised manufacturing facilities and proven execution capabilities.”

POWER TO FOOD

India's gas shortage will make dal compete with data

ANDY MUKHERJEE
BLOOMBERG OPINION

With the war in Iran now in its second month, India's cooking-gas shortage is turning serious. Policymakers must view this as more than a temporary blip; it is a crisis that may permanently shift how the world's most-populous nation consumes energy.

Electric cooktops are vanishing from shelves: Amazon.com Inc.'s local unit reported a 30-fold jump in sales. This marks a pivot for a country where liquefied petroleum gas, or LPG, has 332 million customers. The gas comes home in red-colored cylinders, delivered by a vast distribution network controlled by state-owned refiners. Assuming 10% of households switch to electric and 70% cook dinner simultaneously, the extra 28-gigawatt demand equals nearly a tenth of the summer peak load.

This additional load is more than the power-guzzling potential of all data centers under construction globally. Should the LPG squeeze worsen, planners may have to tell Silicon Valley firms investing in India to go slow. They want to lower the cost of AI tokens by tapping India's solar power, but New Delhi must prioritise human welfare over artificial intelligence.

Since kitchens add to demand after sunset, capital must flow toward solar-power storage. India's grid is robust, but substations need upgrades. The neighborhood transformer that has adapted to an increasingly air-conditioner-heavy lifestyle might fry if everyone cooks dal at 8 pm.

Even before war-induced fertilizer shortages raise food prices, the economics of an Indian meal are changing. Imports meet 65% of LPG demand. Roughly 90% of shipments originate in the Persian Gulf; these vessels are now stranded or trickling through the Strait of Hormuz in na-

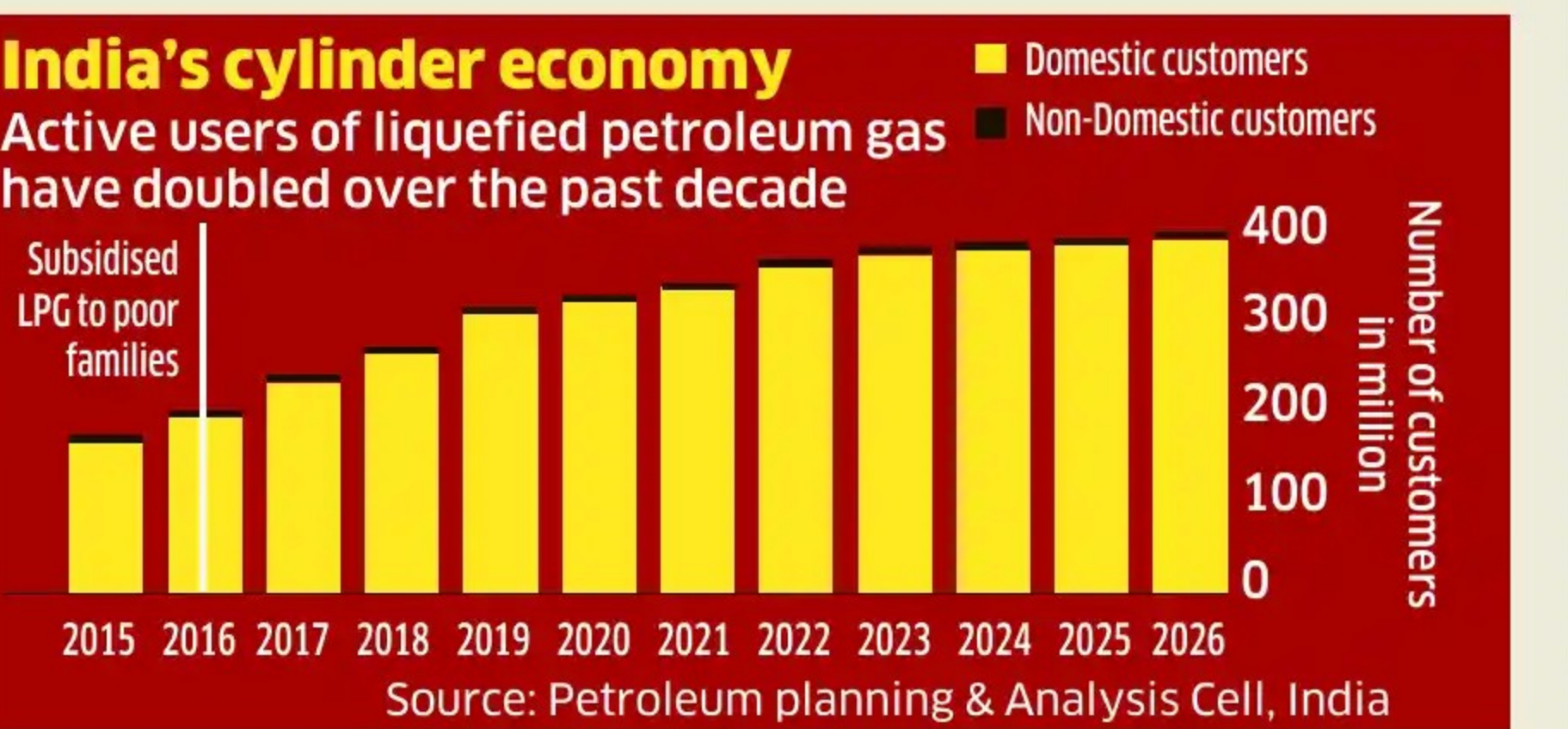


vy-escorted convoys. Even the Red Sea route for US and Norwegian LPG is in doubt with Houthi involvement in the conflict.

New Delhi is aggressively pushing urban households toward piped natural gas, or PNG. This is the right short-term move for three reasons. One, China and India are outliers in Asia because their power sectors use little LNG; lit stoves won't cause blackouts. Two, availability of domestic gas in India makes import dependence less acute than for crude oil-derived LPG. If global deficits worsen, LNG can be diverted from transport to kitchens. Three, India can buy US shale gas via the Cape of Good Hope, despite the higher cost.

Conversely, LPG is beholden to the Strait of Hormuz. Propane and butane processing at domestic refineries has been stagnant for years amid surging rural demand. To reduce kitchen smoke, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has added more than 100 million subsidised LPG customers over the past decade. While laudable and popular, the programme ignored energy security. Before the start of the war, local LPG storage was adequate to meet just 17 days of demand, down from 22 in 2008.

Cylinder prices rose 7% in March and may climb further after this month's crucial state elections. Although the government maintains that supplies of domestic LPG cylinders are normal, it



has mandated refill delays. Commercial supplies — their blue-colored cylinders are bigger — have been cut. The street-food scene at New Delhi's bus station has gone quiet. The *Bloomberg News* reporters who went there recently came across empty stalls. Labour is starting to flee industrial hubs like Surat in Gujarat, as anxiety rises among migrant workers over the cost of their next meal. LPG prices in the black market are soaring. In parliament, Modi compared the current situation to the Covid-19 crisis, when a mass exodus tanked the economy.

My first memory of my mother's kitchen in northern India is a coal oven — the 1973 oil shock had made kerosene stoves a luxury. In the 1980s, LPG became the middle-class norm.

Another shift is arriving. Consumers are rational; they know 1.4 billion people cannot rely on peace in the Middle East to cook their meals. In the long run, only the sun can be India's saviour. Until there is adequate solar-power storage to meet nighttime load, abundant local coal will keep electricity flowing to kitchens. If influencers haven't yet mastered making samosas in air fryers, they should.

Energy planners must decide what matters more: spending electricity on exporting AI tokens to the West, or keeping dosa and dal affordable for local families. Now is not the time to do both.



Shruthi
Shruthi downs
Natasha for
9-ball pool title

BENGALURU, DHNS: Tamil Nadu's L.Shruthi weathered a mid-match fightback from Natasha Chethan of Karnataka en route to her maiden junior girls' 9-ball pool National title in Ludhiana, Punjab late on Tuesday evening.

The Coimbatore girl scored a 6-4 victory over the reigning champion in the final on her debut. This was the 18-year-old cueist's second National crown in as many months. She won the junior snooker title in January.

One of the most improved players on the circuit now, Shruthi jumped to a quick 3-0 lead in the race-to-6 affair. However, Natasha fought back in fine fashion, winning four racks in a row to take a 4-3 lead.

It could have easily been 5-3, but the Bengaluru cueist had the chance to close out the rack following Shruthi's error on nine. Natasha missed it and the TN player closed it to draw level at 4-4.

Shruthi took the next without much ado and came up with two great shots following Natasha's safety play on eight. Shruthi doubled it to the top right-hand pocket and cut the nine to the centre pocket to emerge triumphant.

In the junior boys' event, Maharashtra's Aarav Sancheti, who has been on a roll this season, outplayed Karnataka's Laksh Sharma 7-3 in the title clash.

Results: (9-ball pool): Finals: Junior boys: Aarav Sancheti (Mah) bt Laksh Sharma (Kar) 7-3.

Junior girls: L.Shruthi (TN) bt Natasha Chethan (Kar) 6-4.

Trap shooters
fail to reach
finals

TANGIER (MOROCCO), PTI: Indian trap shooters failed to reach the finals in both the men's and women's events after two days of qualification rounds at the inaugural ISSF Shotgun World Cup here on Wednesday.

Kynan Chenai and Aashima Ahlawat fought hard but missed reaching the finals of the men's and women's trap competitions respectively by an identical one-point margin. Kynan shot 119 (24, 24, 24, 24, 23) while Aashima tallied 111 (22, 22, 21, 22, 24), as they bowed out in 13th and 14th spots respectively.

Bhowaneesh Mendiratta (23, 24, 25, 20, 23) shot rounds of 20 and 23 in the men's trap to give up his overnight (23, 24, 25) advantage of sixth spot, eventually finishing 39th in the pecking order. Olympian Prithviraj Tondaiman was further down in 57th with a score of 111 (24, 21, 20, 23, 23) after five rounds.

Reigning Olympic champion Nathan Hales of Great Britain topped the 83-man qualification field, firing a 123 over two days and five rounds.

Rinku Romeo
fancied for
Maharaja Plate

DELHI SELECTIONS

Ajay Sharma-trained Rinku Romeo, to be ridden by Arjun is fancied to win the Maharaja Plate, the feature event of the races on Thursday. The first race starts at 2.45 pm.

1. Hot Weather Plate - 1100m: Super Speed 1; Sir Mor 2; Ustaad Ji 3.

2. The Summer Plate Div. I - 1200m: Properly Posh 1; Lucky Lips 2; Jaat Hero 3.

3. The Summer Plate Div. II - 1200m: Nairobi 1; Chieftain 2; Beat Goes On 3.

4. The April Plate - 1200m: Insta Millionaire 1; Eastern Crown 2; Thanks Again 3.

5. The Maharaja Plate - 1600m: Rinku Romeo 1; Master Multitude 2; Ashwa Figo 3.

6. The Spot Light Plate - 1000m: Lady Hitman 1; Weronika 2; Elite 3.

Day's best: Insta Millionaire. **Jackpot:** 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6. **Treble:** 4, 5, 6.

KOLKATA RACES

The earlier postponed Kolkata races -- on April 1 at the Royal Calcutta Turf Club -- have been rescheduled to Friday (April 3), confirmed the race stewards on Wednesday.

Complete fall of crumbled empire

Italy lose to Bosnia to miss out
on 3rd straight WC berth

PARIS, AFP

Italy failed to qualify for a third consecutive World Cup as a play-off defeat on penalties to Bosnia and Herzegovina on Tuesday meant the Azzurri will not go to this year's tournament in North America while Turkey, the Czech Republic and Sweden all secured their places at the finals.

Italy have won the World Cup four times, but they failed to qualify for the 2018 and 2022 tournaments and will once again have to watch from afar as the field is expanded to 48 teams in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Bosnia won 4-1 in the shootout in Zenica after their play-off final finished 1-1 at the end of extra time, with Sandro Tonali the only Italy player to score from the spot as Francesco Pio Esposito blazed their first penalty over and Bryan Cristante smashed his kick against the crossbar.

Moise Kean had given Gennaro Gattuso's Italy the lead on 15 minutes, but they were reduced to 10 men when Alessandro Bastoni was shown a straight red card late in the first half.

Bosnia equalised on 79 minutes through Haris Tabakovic, and with no further goals in extra time the tie was decided on penalties.

The 2014 edition is the last time Italy qualified. They went out in the group stage, like in 2010. They have not won a World Cup knockout game since they last lifted the trophy in 2006.

Turkey, Sweden in

Turkey qualified as Kerem Akturkoglu's 53rd-minute goal secured a 1-0 win in Kosovo, shattering their hosts' dream

of appearing at the tournament for the first time.

It will be Turkey's first appearance at a World Cup since reaching the semifinals in 2002. Vincenzo Montella's team will go into Group D along with co-hosts the United States, Paraguay and Australia.

Sweden recovered from a desperate performance in the group stage of qualifying to secure their place at the finals in dramatic fashion.

European playoff results: Bosnia-Herzegovina: 1 (Tabakovic 79th) bt Italy: 1 (Kean 15th) 4-1 on penalties; Sweden: 3 (Elanga 20th, Lagerbielke 44th, Gyokeres 88th) bt Poland: 2 (Zalewski 33rd, Swiderski 55th); Kosovo: 0 lt to Turkey: 1 (Akturkoglu 53rd); Czech Republic: 2 (Sulc 3rd, Krejci 100th) bt Denmark: 2 (Andersen 72nd, Hogn 111th) 3-1 on penalties.

Iraq, Congo return

Iraq became the 48th and final team to qualify for the World Cup on Tuesday, defeating Bolivia 2-1 in an intercontinental playoff in Guadalupe, Mexico to seal their first appearance at the finals in 40 years.

Meanwhile, the Democratic Republic of Congo defeated Jamaica 1-0 after extra time in an intercontinental playoff in Guadalajara, Mexico to seal their first World Cup appearance in 52 years.

Iraq, whose preparations for Tuesday's playoff had been disrupted by the war in the West Asia, will play in World Cup Group I against France, Senegal and Norway. Goals from Ali Al-Hamadi and Aymen Hussein secured a famous win for Iraq, whose last appearance at the World Cup came at the 1986 finals in Mexico.

Playoff tournament results: Congo: 1 (Tuanzebe 100th) bt Jamaica: 0; Iraq: 2 (Al-Hamadi 10th, Hussein 53rd) bt Bolivia (Paniagua 38th).



Bosnia-Herzegovina players celebrate after defeating Italy in a penalty shootout to seal their World Cup berth during the FIFA Qualifiers in Zenica on Tuesday night. REUTERS

Messi runs the show in Zambia rout

BUENOS AIRES, AGENCIES

In what was likely his final home appearance for Argentina's national squad, Lionel Messi scored a goal and provided an assist in a 5-0 rout of Zambia on Tuesday night in a farewell friendly ahead of the World Cup.

The 38-year-old Messi set up Julian Alvarez in the fourth minute and then scored in the 43rd at La Bombonera stadium in Buenos Aires.

The crowd gave him a standing ovation and pleaded with him to help Argentina win another World Cup. The global tournament kicks off on June 11 in the United States, Mexico and Canada.

Nicolas Otamendi and Valentin Barco also scored for Argentina.



Argentina's Lionel Messi celebrates after scoring against Zambia in Buenos Aires on Tuesday. AP/PTI

The defending world champions raised some concern after their lacklustre performance last Friday in a 2-1 victory over Mauritania. In the lead-up to the Zambia friendly, coach Lionel Scaloni had warned that if

the team didn't improve its performance he would take drastic measures regarding the 26-man World Cup squad, which must be submitted by May 30.

For the last home game before the World Cup, Scaloni

started with a lineup similar to that one that defeated France in the 2022 final, with the notable exclusion of midfielder Rodrigo De Paul, who is recovering from a muscle injury and performed poorly against Mauritania.

Portugal win

Bruno Fernandes picked apart the United States defence to hand Portugal a 2-0 friendly win on Tuesday over the World Cup co-hosts, who again failed to impress ahead of this summer's tournament.

Results: USA: 0 lt to Portugal: 2 (Trincao 36th, Felix 59th); Argentina: 5 (Alvarez 4th, Messi 43rd, Otamendi 50th pen, Chanda 68th own goal, Barco 90th+4) bt Zambia: 0; Mexico: 1 (Sanchez 19th) drew with Belgium: 1 (Lukebakio 46th); England: 0 lt to Japan: 1 (Mitoma 23rd); Ukraine: 1 (Hutsuliak 46th) bt Albania: 0.

WC: Final ticket sales phase begins

Nearly seven million
tickets are being
offered on first-come
first-serve basis

WASHINGTON (US), AFP

The fourth and final phase of ticket sales for the 2026 World Cup in North America began on Wednesday, FIFA announced.

The phase for the June 11-July 19 event in the United States, Mexico and Canada involves more than three million tickets.

This "last-minute" sales phase opened at 1500 GMT on the official website, FIFA.com/tickets, the global governing body stated in a press release.

Tickets are being sold on a "first-come, first-served" basis and will remain available until the end of the competition on July 19, it added.

Tickets will be released for sale on a rolling basis -- including, on occasion, for matches taking place on the very same day -- according to FIFA.



The MetLife Stadium in New York will host the FIFA World Cup final in July this year.

At the scheduled time, prospective buyers were directed to a "waiting" page to "queue" while awaiting access to the site, a wait that could last several hours.

"A countdown will appear before you can enter the ticket sales phase. Once the countdown is over, an 'Enter' button will be available for 5 minutes. Click it to access," instructions specify.

In total, nearly seven million tickets are being offered for the competition, taking into

account the capacities of the 16 stadiums hosting the global tournament.

More than three million of these tickets have already been sold during the first three sales phases -- including over one million during the random selection draw phase alone (held in January and February), which received 500 million requests, according to FIFA.

The global governing body is likely to break the all-time record of 3.5 million tickets sold for a World Cup -- a mark

set during the 1994 edition. This summer, the tournament will feature 48 teams and 104 matches, 78 of which will take place on American soil.

The issue of ticketing has sparked controversy, with FIFA facing accusations of offering tickets at exorbitant prices, in disregard of promises made when the tournament was awarded to the three host nations.

On March 24, Football Supporters Europe (FSE) -- an organization representing European fans -- and Euroconsumers -- a group representing consumers across the continent -- announced they had filed a complaint against FIFA with the European Commission. They alleged abuse of a dominant market position and seek to compel the organization to abandon its "opaque and unfair" ticket purchasing procedures. FIFA has defended its ticket pricing, which, according to president Gianni Infantino, is driven by "crazy" demand.

However, in December, the governing body did introduce a \$60 ticket category reserved exclusively for official supporters' clubs.

India face tough
Japan test

PATHUM THANI (THAILAND), PTI



Joakim Alexandersson

The Indian Under-20 women's side will hope to secure an elusive FIFA World Cup berth when it begins its AFC U-20 Women's Asian Cup campaign against six-time champions Japan, here on Thursday.

It was earlier last month that their senior counterparts were knocked out of the group stage of the Asian Cup ending their World Cup qualifying hopes as they finished at the bottom of the group.

But the U-20 side coached by astute tactician Joakim Alexandersson has arrived here with confidence.

The Young Tigresses have returned to the continental stage after a 20-year gap, having qualified for the tournament by topping their group in the qualifiers in August last year.

Their previous appearance came in 2006, where they exited in the group stage.

For India, this marks the start of a challenging but significant campaign, with a

place in the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup Poland 2026 on the line.

India are placed in a tough Group C alongside Japan, Australia (April 5), and Chinese Taipei (April 8). The top two teams, along with the two best third-placed sides across three groups, will advance to the quarter-finals, where a place in the Poland World Cup awaits the final-four.

Head coach Alexandersson said acknowledged the big challenge.

"We are very much aware that we are new to this scene right now with the India team. We know we are facing tough opponents and we have respect for them," said the Swede.

State's Dasharath, Nagini clinch gold

BENGALURU, DHNS

Racewalker Dasharath Talawar and middle-distance runner Nagini added two gold medals to table toppers Karnataka's tally on Day 8 of the Khelo India Tribal Games in Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh on Wednesday.

Dasharath led Karnataka's 1-2 in the men's 10km racewalk with a time of 45:13.85s with Darshan Bagadi (46:25.90s) finishing second ahead of Gujarat's Sagarbhai Katara (48:16.09s) at the Kreedra Parisarathletics track in Jagdalpur.

Nagini then dominated the women's 800m race to clinch the gold with a time of 2:13.80s



Karnataka's Dasharath Talawar (left) and Nagini. KITG

to take Karnataka's gold medal tally to 21. Karnataka has also bagged eight silver and seven bronze for an aggregate of 36 medals.

Chhattisgarh's Gajendra Thakur claimed the men's 800m silver medal with a time of 1:53.82s behind Munda, who clocked a time of 1:53.33s. Earlier, Chhattisgarh's men's hockey team clinched

the bronze medal by beating neighbouring Madhya Pradesh 14-6. The two medals took their tally to two gold, eight silver and five bronze medals and they are placed 10th in the overall standings.

With just one day of track and field competitions left, second-placed Odisha continued to chase the table toppers with four gold medals on Wednesday to take their overall tally to 17 gold, 10 silver and 16 bronze medals.

Results: Karnataka only: Athletics: Men: 10km race walk: Dasharath Talawar (Kar) 45:13.85s 1; Darshan Bagadi (Kar) 46:25.90s 2; Sagarbhai Katara (Guj) 48:16.09 3. **Women: 800m:** Nagini (Kar) 2:13.80 1; Purnima Sandili (Od) 2:15.88 2; Shanti Bai (MP) 2:19.11 3.

WORLD CUP GROUPS

- **A:** Mexico, South Africa, South Korea, Czech Republic
- **B:** Canada, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Qatar, Switzerland
- **C:** Brazil, Morocco, Haiti, Scotland
- **D:** USA, Paraguay, Australia, Turkey
- **E:** Germany, Curacao, Ivory Coast, Ecuador
- **F:** Netherlands, Japan, Sweden, Tunisia
- **G:** Belgium, Egypt, Iran, New Zealand
- **H:** Spain, Cape Verde, Saudi Arabia, Uruguay
- **I:** France, Senegal, Iraq, Norway
- **J:** Argentina, Algeria, Austria, Jordan
- **K:** Portugal, DR Congo, Uzbekistan, Colombia
- **L:** England, Croatia, Ghana, Panama

Spanish police
open probe into
anti-Muslim
chants

MADRID, AFP: Spanish police said on Wednesday that they were investigating "Islamophobic and xenophobic" chants heard during the Spain-Egypt international football match in Barcelona, which the government said "embarrass us as a society".

Egypt's national anthem was also jeered ahead of the 0-0 draw in Barcelona on Tuesday in a pre-World Cup friendly, while authorities at the RCDE Stadium appealed to fans more than once over the public announcement system to refrain from making offensive comments. It was the latest in a string of similar incidents to overshadow Spanish football in recent years, with Real Madrid's Brazilian attacker Vinicius Junior in particular repeatedly racially abused.

"We are investigating yesterday's Islamophobic and xenophobic chants at RCDE Stadium during the Spain-Egypt friendly match," Catalonia's regional police force said.

McIlroy to
return for DP
World India
Championship

NEW DELHI, PTI : Five-time Major winner Rory McIlroy will tee up at the DP World India Championship at the Delhi Golf Club for a second consecutive season from October 15 to 18.

The world No.2 and career Grand Slam winner made his first ever appearance in India last season and is now confirmed to return for the USD 4,000,000 event.

The reigning Race to Dubai champion confirmed his position as a golfing icon when he completed the career Grand Slam in memorable fashion at the Augusta National last year.

The Green Jacket added to his four previous Major victories at the 2011 US Open, the US PGA Championship in 2012 and 2014 and The Open in 2014.

"I've always enjoyed playing a global schedule so I was excited to visit India for the first time last season to be part of the inaugural DP World India Championship," McIlroy said in a press release.

"The golf fans in India were so welcoming, and the whole experience was truly memorable, so it's a pleasure to be returning to Delhi in October."

The Irishman's stellar 2025 season also included a second Amgen Irish Open title and two more victories on the PGA TOUR, as well as helping Europe earn their first away win in the Ryder Cup since 2012 at Bethpage Black, New York.



Rory McIlroy



10 TEAMS 13 VENUES 58 DAYS 74 MATCHES

“ We see Ishan (Kishan), as you saw by his performance in the first game, he loves leadership. I think it can have a real positive effect on his batting and keeping, and as he gets to understand the group and the dynamics.

DANIEL VETTORI, SRH COACH



IN BRIEF

KSCA grant for women cricketers

► The Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) on Wednesday announced a monthly grant to retired women cricketers above the age of 55, reports DHNS.

While KSCA hasn't announced the amount, the eligible players must have represented the state in the Senior Women's National Championship and must not be drawing a similar benefit from BCCI. Eligible players have been requested to submit their details.

Garuda HC post big victory

► Suresh Babu and Hari Haran scored a hat-trick each as Garuda Hockey Club thrashed Bagalkot Jilla Hockey Association 13-0 in the KSHA 'B' Division Hockey League Championship on Wednesday, reports DHNS.

Results: Garuda Hockey Club: 13 (Suresh Babu 4th, 5th, 6th, Lakshmanan Sri 9th, 32nd, Senthil Pandian 12th, Magesh 14th, Aravind Rajan 19th, 24th, Hari Haran 20th, 21st, 34th, Praveen 26th) bt Bagalkot Jilla Hockey Association: 0; Ashko Hockey Club: 3 (Govinda 6th, Apachu 32nd, Nayeemuddin 38th) bt Dhyanchand Hockey Club, Bangalore: 1 (Shreyas 9th).

CVR Nagar in quarters

► Sir CV Raman Nagar remained unbeaten to top Group A and storm into the quarterfinals of the Chief Minister's Cup football tournament as they defeated Padmanabhanagar 5-0 for their third straight win at the KSFA Stadium here on Wednesday.

Result: Group A: CVR Nagar: 5 (R Sachin 14th, 61st, 88th, Vineeth M 51st, Prince Alwin 69th) bt Padmanabhanagar: 0.

BFC appoint Medeira

► Bengaluru FC on Wednesday appointed former India head coach Savio Medeira as the club's head of Youth Development, reports DHNS.

Medeira arrives in Bengaluru with over two decades of experience in coaching, technical development, and coach education across Indian and international football.

Sony Sports in Kannada

► Sony Sports Network (SSN) on Wednesday announced the launch of its Kannada channel to expand its regional push, reports DHNS.

Beagles score big victory

BENGALURU, DHNS: Haeshan scored 21 points and Jayanth tallied 16 as Beagles BC defeated HBR BC 73-37 in a boys' final league cum knockout match of the State Junior basketball championship for the DN Rajanna Trophy at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium on Wednesday.

Results: Boys (final league): Beagles BC: 73 (Haeshan 21, Jayanth 16) bt HBR BC: 37 (Samveg 13, Rishith 11); PPC: 71 (Adithya 22, Rayan 16) bt DK District: 61 (Lydell 22, Deekshith 12).

Girls (round robin): Viveks SC: 71 (Jeyashree 18, Aarohi 14) bt Mandya District: 47 (Yashaswini 14, Manasa 13); DYES Vidyanagar: 78 (Sheetal 24, Ishitha 24) bt Beagles BC: 52.

ON TV

CRICKET

IPL: KKR vs SRH (7:30 pm). **LIVE on Star Sports 1, JioHotstar.**

FOOTBALL

IFL: Dempo SC vs Namdhari FC (4 pm). Real Kashmir FC vs Diamond Harbour FC (6:30 pm). **LIVE on Sony Sports Ten 5, SonyLIV.**

Rizvi makes Capital Impact

Youngster smashes unbeaten 70 to guide Delhi past LSG in tricky chase

LUCKNOW, PTI

Sameer Rizvi gave an ample display of his talent, coming in as an 'Impact Substitute', as Delhi Capitals cantered home by six wickets against Lucknow Super Giants despite initial stutters to make a winning start in the IPL here on Wednesday.

Chasing a lowly target of 142, DC were reduced to 26 for 4 within first five overs but Rizvi (70 not out off 47 balls), substituting T Natarajan, conjured an unbroken 119-run stand for the fifth wicket with the seasoned Tristan Stubbs (39 not out off 32 balls) to ensure full points in just 17.1 overs.

Rizvi showed exemplary maturity as he first saw off a spell from Mohammed Shami (1/28 in 4 overs), Mohsin Khan (1/19 in 4 overs) and Prince Yadav (2/20 in 3 overs). In all, he hit five fours and four sixes to make a chase look ridiculously easy on a seamer-friendly track. Once he played the ramp shot over keeper's head for a six off Anrich Nortje, he opened up. The turning point was Shahbaz Ahmed's lone over -- the 10th of the DC innings. Rizvi slog swept him behind square, pulled him to the square leg and tickled one through fine leg with 16 coming off that over.

After that, there was no stopping Rizvi, who lofted Aiden Markram over long-on and pulled Mohsin for good mea-



Delhi Capitals' Sameer Rizvi square drives one to the boundary during his match-winning 70 not out off 47 balls against Lucknow Super Giants at the Ekana Stadium on Wednesday. REUTERS

sure as he slowly and surely knocked the stuffing out of LSG's sails.

To defend a small total, LSG needed early breakthroughs and Shami was right on the money as KL Rahul was gone for first-ball duck trying to slash one over point.

Mohsin, who was playing his first game in one year, got one to bounce a tad bit extra and had Nitish Rana caught at slip. Pathum Nissanka's first game ended in a disappointing note as he mistimed a pull off Prince Yadav with Rishabh Pant taking a well judged catch running backwards.

DC's most dependable player, their skipper Axar Patel got a beauty from Prince Yadav, a delivery that tailed in getting him clean bowled. But then, Rizvi and Stubbs had other ideas as they slowly and surely ensured an impressive win.

Earlier, LSG put up an embarrassing batting display with some questionable tactical calls to be shot out for 141 in 18.4 overs after Delhi Capitals skipper Axar opted to bowl first. Even though the Ekana Stadium wicket wasn't a belter, there couldn't be any tangible excuse for LSG unit for its pathetic batting display.

SCOREBOARD

LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS: Mitchell Marsh c Stubbs b Kuldeep 35, Rishabh Pant (run out) 7, Aiden Markram b Axar 11, Ayush Badoni c Rahul b Natarajan 0, Nicholas Pooran b Ngidi 8, Abdul Samad c Miller b Natarajan 36, Mukul Choudhary c&b Kuldeep 14, Shahbaz Ahmed (not out) 15, Mohammed Shami c Kuldeep b Natarajan 1, Anrich Nortje c Stubbs b Ngidi 0, Mohsin Khan c Mukesh b Ngidi 0. Extras (B-4, LB-8, W-2) 14. **TOTAL (all out, 18.4 overs) 141.**

Fall of wickets: 1-19, 2-48, 3-49, 4-65, 5-71, 6-105, 7-138, 8-140, 9-141.

Bowling: Mukesh Kumar 3-0-17-0, Lungi Ngidi 3-4-0-27-3, Axar Patel 3-0-17-1, T Natarajan 4-0-29-3,

Kuldeep Yadav 4-0-31-2, Vipraj Nigam 1-0-8-0.

DELHI CAPITALS: KL Rahul c Mohsin b Shami 0, Pathum Nissanka c Pant b Prince 1, Rana c Samad b Mohsin 15, Sameer Rizvi (not out) 70, Axar Patel b Prince 0, Tristan Stubbs (not out) 39. Extras (LB-4, W-16) 20. **TOTAL (for 4 wkts, 17.1 overs) 145.**

Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-21, 3-25, 4-26.

Bowling: Mohammed Shami 4-0-28-1, Prince Yadav 3-0-20-2, Mohsin Khan 4-1-19-1, Anrich Nortje 4-0-39-0, Shahbaz Ahmed 1-0-16-0, Aiden Markram 1-0-13-0, Abdul Samad 0.1-0-6-0.

Result: DC won by 6 wkts.

PoM: Sameer Rizvi

Chahal sings Connolly praises

MULLANPUR, PTI

Punjab Kings spinner Yuzvendra Chahal believes young Cooper Connolly will be one of the "finds" of this season, praising the young Australian batter's maturity after he scored a match-winning fifty on his IPL debut.

The 22-year-old Connolly announced himself in style, smashing an unbeaten 72 to guide Punjab Kings to a nervy three-wicket win over Gujarat Titans in their IPL campaign opener here on Tuesday.

"He's only 20 something but has a hunger. The way he performed in his very first match, batting at number 3, playing a match-winning innings, shows how mature he is mentally," Chahal said at the post-match press conference.

Walking in at No. 3, Connolly held firm even as wickets fell at the other end, showing remarkable composure for a newcomer. "He knows what the situation is. He knows that



Punjab Kings' Cooper Connolly showed what an exciting young talent he is with a blistering half-century against Gujarat Titans on Tuesday. PTI

if I am there till the end, then I have to finish the game. And that shows maturity. That is a good sign for our team.

"And the way he is batting, I think he will be one of the finds of this season," Chahal said. Chahal himself played a key

role with the ball, returning figures of 2/28 in his four overs. His experience shone through as he applied pressure in the middle overs, restricting GT to 162/6.

Speaking about the bowling plans, he said: "Because

the wicket was a little slow, we didn't want to give pace. We wanted to bowl as many cutters as possible. The plan was that if the batsmen hit on longer boundaries, it would be good for us."

Despite Connolly's heroics, Punjab Kings suffered a middle-order collapse, with Priyansh Arya (7), captain Shreyas Iyer (18), Nehal Wadhwa (3), Shashank Singh (4) and Marcus Stoinis (0) failing to make an impact.

However, Chahal played down the concerns.

"Every year you have one or two matches like that, and we are lucky that the first match was like that. So, it's nothing to worry about right now. The way we have been playing since last year, we will go to the ground with the same positive energy and there is a hunger, which we missed last year," he said.

PBKS, who moved to fourth spot on the point stable, will next take on Chennai Super Kings in Chennai on Friday.

KKR coach Nayar ready to play on any Eden pitch

KOLKATA, PTI: Having started their IPL season on an ominous note, defending champions Kolkata Knight Riders returned to the familiar home territory expecting favourable conditions, but early signs suggest the surfaces at the Eden Gardens may not entirely align with their preferences.

While there was no outright criticism, the body language of the KKR think-tank and the guarded response from head coach Abhishek Nayar (in pic) hinted at a degree of unease, even as he firmly shut the door on using conditions as an excuse.

Repeatedly quizzed about the pitch on the eve of their match against Sunrisers Hyderabad, Nayar chose his words carefully, even joking that he might get "siphoned off for something else" by the

anti-corruption unit, but his messaging remained consistent -- KKR will deal with what is on offer without any "excuses".

"I think the beauty of our sport is the fact that it is unpredictable. When you're explaining cricket to someone who doesn't know the game, you tell them that if the sun is out, the pitch is good; if the clouds are in, the bowlers are in. That's the beauty of the game -- you want the unexpected," Nayar said.

"Just because there's grass on the pitch, it doesn't change how we look at the game. We as players and support staff have to be professional enough to take what's put in front of us and run with it. Those are circumstances -- sometimes they work, sometimes they don't," the coach added.



Suryakumar Yadav

India to tour Zimbabwe for three T20Is in July

MUMBAI, PTI: India will head to Zimbabwe for a three-match T20I series in July for their first assignment since clinching their World Cup title this year.

The BCCI informed in a statement on Wednesday that the Indian men's team will play three games against the hosts at the Harare Sports Club on July 23, 25 and 26 respectively.

This will be the first of the two bilateral series slated for the 2026-27 season between India and Zimbabwe, who are slated to travel for a three-match ODI series to be played on January 3, 6 and 9 in Kolkata, Hyderabad and Mumbai respectively.

India had won the T20 World Cup for a second consecutive time last month, beating New Zealand in the final in Ahmedabad.

Former cricketer Gurav no more

MUMBAI, PTI: His friends used to fondly call him "Vivian Richards of Mumbai" for the way he used to bat but Anil Gurav, one of Dronacharya Award winning coach late Ramakant Achrekar's earlier disciples, could never make the grade due to choices that he made and lived on to regret.

Gurav, who is said to have been one of Achrekar's best students but never made it to the Mumbai side beyond playing club-level cricket, passed away here on Tuesday at his residence in Nalaso-para.

Konstas, Maxwell miss out

SYDNEY, AFP

Young opening batsman Sam Konstas and veteran all-rounder Glenn Maxwell were axed on Wednesday as Cricket Australia announced a list of 21 nationally contracted players for the 2026-27 season.

Australia, who will play 20 Tests in a 12-month period from August, have opted to go with opener Jake Weatherald, 31, instead of the out-of-form 20-year-old Konstas.

With Australia facing such a Test-heavy schedule, white-ball specialists Maxwell and Matt Short were also dropped from last year's list along with retired opener Usman Khawaja and injured fast bowler Lance Morris.

A surprise was the omission of fast bowler Jhye Richardson, who played his first Test in four years in the Boxing Day Ashes clash.

The 29-year-old had been touted as one of the natural



Glenn Maxwell

successors to Australia's ageing pace stalwarts Mitchell Starc (36), Josh Hazlewood (35) and Scott Boland (36).

Cricketer Australia instead opted to reward fellow Ashes-winning quick bowlers Brendan Doggett, who is 31, and the 36-year-old Michael Neser.

"The next 12 months encompass a busy Test schedule across a range of conditions and challenges," said chair of men's selectors George Bailey.

"This is reflected in the contract list through a predomi-

nance of Test and multi-format players for this cycle."

Australia start their 2026-27 season with a two-match home series against Bangladesh in August. They will travel for three ODIs in Zimbabwe, plus three ODIs and three Tests in South Africa during September and October.

Australia return home for a white-ball series against England followed by 10 Tests in 14 weeks, starting with four at home to New Zealand in December and January.

A five-Test tour of India begins on January 21 and the season will end with the 150th anniversary Test against England at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in March, 2027.

Contracted list: Xavier Bartlett, Scott Boland, Alex Carey, Pat Cummins, Brendan Doggett, Nathan Ellis, Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Matthew Kuhnemann, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Mitchell Marsh, Todd Murphy, Michael Neser, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, Jake Weatherald, Beau Webster, Adam Zampa.